

MOUNT KIMBIE

AZARI & III

LABELS WE LOVE

TENNAKE

OVAL

SHLOHMO

# XLR8R

134  
JUL/AUG  
2010

ACCELERATING MUSIC & CULTURE  
XLR8R.COM



## Robert Hood

THE MINIMAL  
MASTER TALKS  
DETROIT, AFRICA,  
AND THE APOCALYPSE

0 7148610119 4 0 8

\$4.99 US \$6.99 CANADA XLR8R.COM  
PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER

**MAKE AN  
IMPRESSION  
BY BREAKING  
THE MOLD.**



**DJ Anthony Valadez built his xD to a different tune.  
Go backstage and see how it all went down at  
[ReinventTheWheels.com](http://ReinventTheWheels.com)**

Modified vehicle is a show vehicle only, and is not street legal. All modifications to the vehicle were made by a third party with non-Genuine Toyota parts (which voids the warranty and may adversely impact performance and safety). ©2010 Scion, a marque of Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc. All rights reserved. Scion, the Scion logo and xD are registered trademarks of Toyota Motor Corporation and Reinvent The Wheels is a trademark of Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc.



what moves you



FROM THE MAKERS OF GRAND THEFT AUTO

# RED DEAD REDEMPTION™

## OUTLAWS TO THE END

**OUT NOW**

[ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/REDDEADREDEMPTION](http://ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/REDDEADREDEMPTION)

**MATURE 17+**  
**M**  
Blood  
Intense Violence  
Nudity  
Strong Language  
Strong Sexual Content  
Use of Drugs



©2005-2010 Rockstar Games, Inc. Rockstar Games, the R logo, Red Dead Redemption and all related marks and logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. in the U.S.A. and/or foreign countries. Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks and "PS3" is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The PlayStation Network Logo is a service mark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Entertainment Software Association. All other marks property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.



134

July / August 2010

Actress	14
Five Star: Ghosts On Tape	16
Tensnake	18
Labels We Love	20
De Tropix	22
Robert Hood	26
The LA Beat Scene	36
Mount Kimbie	44
Azari & III	48
Reviews	57
Bubblin'	60
In the Studio: Oval	62
Artist Tips: Diskjokke	64
Components & Videogames	66
Vis-Ed: Give Up Art	72
Outbox: Solvent	80



MADE OF JAPAN



Every door hides a story, discover them all at [onitsukatiger.com](http://onitsukatiger.com)

## ED'S RANT EIGHT ARMS TO HOLD YOU



TAKE, SHOT IN HIS LOS ANGELES STUDIO BY CHLOE AFTEL

God knows why we called it Operation Tarantula. The plan was simple: create more content, write more stories, offer more MP3s, secure more podcasts, and get it all out there faster. And there was—or so we thought—really only one way to do it: magically grow six more arms overnight.

Sure, our limb configurations may not look any different, but since kickin' off the Tarantula project, it's pretty obvious to anyone who's checked out XLR8R.com lately that there's been some remarkable growth. Over the last two months, we've been going over the top to bring you more music news (starting at 6 a.m. West Coast time), as many as five free MP3s a day, and two exclusive podcasts per week. We hope it's as exciting for you as a reader as it's been for us, because every time we put up a dope-ass new track or confirm a new podcast (from the likes of Todd Edwards, Pilooski, and Pictureplane), the energy down at XLR8R HQ is palpable. As cliché as it sounds, we do it all because we love it, and the rewards of taking XLR8R further into the digital world just make us feel all warm inside.

But hey, you're reading the *magazine*, and for that, rest assured, you'll also be highly rewarded. This July/August issue pulls out all the stops as well, starting with Walter Wasacz's insightful piece on the undisputed master of minimal techno, Robert Hood (shut up, haterz! He coined the effing term, okay?). Wasacz tracked down Hood just before his homecoming performance at Detroit's Movement Festival, and got the goods on the genesis of minimal electronic dance music, and why Hood still calls Motown home.

Back in the reliably balmy environs of Los Angeles, Andy Hermann headed down the street to the Airliner Club, which set the scene for his exploration into the community of new kids who've sprouted up around Low End Theory and the LA beat scene—Baths, Shlohmo, Take, Teebs, even a Denverite named Alex B. All-grown-up XLR8R intern-cum-staff writer Thomas Rees checked in with some of his new favorites, too: Toronto's Azari & Ill, who've been delivering a slew of hot disco-tinged house gems the past few months. And then Andrew Ryce, from his perch in Vancouver, hit up London dubstep innovators (and no, we don't use the term lightly) Mount Kimbie, whose *Crooks and Lovers* LP is poised to make some serious waves this summer.

On top of it all, we've also got Labels We Love, which we've decided to move into a monthly format in order to keep up with the always-fresh world of indie labels. In this edition, we highlight a mere sampling of our recent favorites (Dre Skull's Mixpak Records, Wolf + Lamb Music, and a trifecta of youngsters—PTN, Softspot, and Grizzly), so check back every month from here on out for the absolute hottest and up-and-coming labels of the moment.

While we may be short on breath, there's definitely no shortage of great stuff in the mag and on the site. And if it keeps up this way, you're gonna need eight arms to hold us back.

—Ken Taylor, Editor

## XLR8R

### EDITOR

Ken Taylor (ken.taylor@xlr8r.com)

### CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Tim Saputo (tim.saputo@xlr8r.com)

### MANAGING EDITOR

Shawn Reynaldo (shawn.reynaldo@xlr8r.com)

### VIDEOGAMES EDITOR

Ryan Rayhill (ryan.rayhill@xlr8r.com)

### EDITORIAL INTERNS

Patric Fallon, James Jano

### STAFF WRITERS

Eric K. Arnold, Joe Colly, Matt Earp, Rob Geary, Derek Grey, David Hemingway, Max Herman, Ethan Holben, Justin Hopper, Josiah Hughes, Brandon Ivers, Luciana Lopez, Cameron Macdonald, Lulu McAllister, Tomas Palermo, Dave Segal, Jesse Serwer, Evan Shamoon, Patrick Sisson, Janet Tzou, Tony Ware, Walter Wasacz, Rico "Superbizzee" Washington

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Rachel Brodsky, Ali Gitlow, Michael Harkin, Andy Hermann, August Howard, Tom Lea, Thomas Rees, Andrew Ryce

### STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Martei Korley, Morgan Howland, Paul O'Valle, Dustin Ross, Ragnar Schmuck, Mathew Scott, Christopher Woodcock

### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Chloe Aftel, Nick Helderman, Tyrone Le Bon, Ken Taylor

### STAFF ILLUSTRATORS

Chuck Anderson for No Pattern, Derek Morris for Trophy, Colin Strandberg for The Work Steady

### ON THE COVER

Robert Hood, shot in The Netherlands by Nick Helderman

### SPECIAL THANKS

Leeor Brown and Terrorbird crew, Ryan Merry, Oliver and Jonas at EPM, Lucius Yeo

Pioneer Dj

# All Access



## Pioneer CDJ-900 Tabletop Multi Player

Access, search and control your content directly with the all-new CDJ-900. The multi-format digital turntable provides the same quality, standards and playability of the legendary CDJ line with the added convenience of native playback of key DJ digital media file formats accessed via CD, portable hard drives and flash media devices. Plus, the CDJ-900 is compatible with today's top DJ performance computer software, and includes rekordbox™, Pioneer's proprietary music management software.

Shown with USB stick (not included).  
Shown with the DJM-700. Sold separately.

### Multi format playback

Pro DJ link connects up to four CDJ-900s that access one player's audio source

Slip Mode creates smooth transitions

Advanced Auto Beat Loop

Free rekordbox™ music management software

MIDI: assign various CDJ-900 buttons to trigger other devices and software

Check out the CDJ-900 at your local  
Authorized Pioneer Dealer today.

[www.pioneerdj.com](http://www.pioneerdj.com)



ANDY HERMANN



Andy Hermann lives in the Highland Park section of Los Angeles, not far from the club that hosts Low End Theory, which he wrote about in this issue's Beat Happening feature. He is the National Music Editor for Metromix.com, and has also written for *BPM*, the *Boston Phoenix*, and *PopMatters* among others. He once sat next to Slash on an airplane, but didn't have the nerve to tell him he thinks Guns 'N Roses are way overrated.

NICK HELDERMAN



Nick Helderman is an Amsterdam-based music and portrait photographer from Leeuwarden, The Netherlands. His work has been published in the *British Journal of Photography*, *Vice*, *OOD*, and *Time Out*, and his clients include Dead Oceans, Hometapes Records, and Converse. He was nominated for this year's Popview/Lex van Rossen Award for best European music photographer for a photo essay he shot on tour with The Ex and Getatchew Mekuria. For this issue, he photographed Robert Hood in The Netherlands.  
[nickhelderman.com](http://nickhelderman.com)

ANDREW RYCE



Andrew Ryce lives on the Canadian west coast in the remote, deserted metropolis of Vancouver, where he writes mostly about music based on the other side of the world as he navigates his way through an undergraduate degree in (you guessed it) English. Focusing on electronic music of all sorts, he writes a monthly column and in-depth features about dubstep and bass music for [onethirtybpm.com](http://onethirtybpm.com) and is a regular contributor to *FACT*. He wrote about Mount Kimbie for this issue of *XLR8R*.  
[myspace.com/andrewryce](http://myspace.com/andrewryce)

CHLOE AFTEL



Chloe Aftel was born in raised in Berkeley, CA, and now splits her time between there and Los Angeles. She has shot many musicians, including Jack White, Sebastien Tellier, Florence & The Machine, Wavves, No Age, and Au Revoir Simone. In the past, her photographs have appeared in *Wired*, *Nylon*, *Dazed & Confused*, *Venus*, *Flaunt*, and more. Besides shooting Glasser for our January/February issue, Chloe photographed the Los Angeles-based artists in this month's Beat Happening feature.  
[chloeaftel.com](http://chloeaftel.com)

## XLR8R

### PUBLISHER

Andrew Smith ([andrew.smith@xlr8r.com](mailto:andrew.smith@xlr8r.com))

### ADVERTISING MANAGER

Ethan Holben ([ethan.holben@xlr8r.com](mailto:ethan.holben@xlr8r.com); 212-226-4553)

### MARKETING INTERN

Mike Blumenfeld

### EVENTS AND ONLINE MARKETING MANAGER

Shawn Reynaldo ([shawn.reynaldo@xlr8r.com](mailto:shawn.reynaldo@xlr8r.com))

### ACCOUNTING MANAGER AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Sally Mundy ([sally.mundy@xlr8r.com](mailto:sally.mundy@xlr8r.com))

### CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sally Mundy ([sally.mundy@xlr8r.com](mailto:sally.mundy@xlr8r.com))

### OPERATIONS CONSULTANT

Michael Prommer

### CO-PUBLISHER

Arias Hung

### ADVERTISING: Dial 415.861.7583, fax 415.861.7584,

email [advertising@xlr8r.com](mailto:advertising@xlr8r.com), or mail XLR8R Magazine, 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Domestic: \$20 (one year, six issues) and \$40 (two years, twelve issues); Canada: \$40 (one year) and \$80 (two years); all other international: \$50 (one year) and \$100 (two years). Subscribe by credit card online or send payment to XLR8R Subscriptions, 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110. Payment made out to "XLR8R Magazine," US funds only. International orders must be paid by credit card or international money order. Questions? Email [service@xlr8r.com](mailto:service@xlr8r.com) or subscribe online at [XLR8R.com](http://XLR8R.com).

**CIRCULATION:** Newsstand distribution through Curtis Circulation. For direct retail sales, contact Sally Mundy at 415.861.7583 x223 or [sally.mundy@xlr8r.com](mailto:sally.mundy@xlr8r.com).

**CONTACT US:** San Francisco HQ: 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110;

New York Office: 114 Bowery, Suite #206, 10013, New York, NY 10001; [letterbox@xlr8r.com](mailto:letterbox@xlr8r.com), fax 415.861.7584



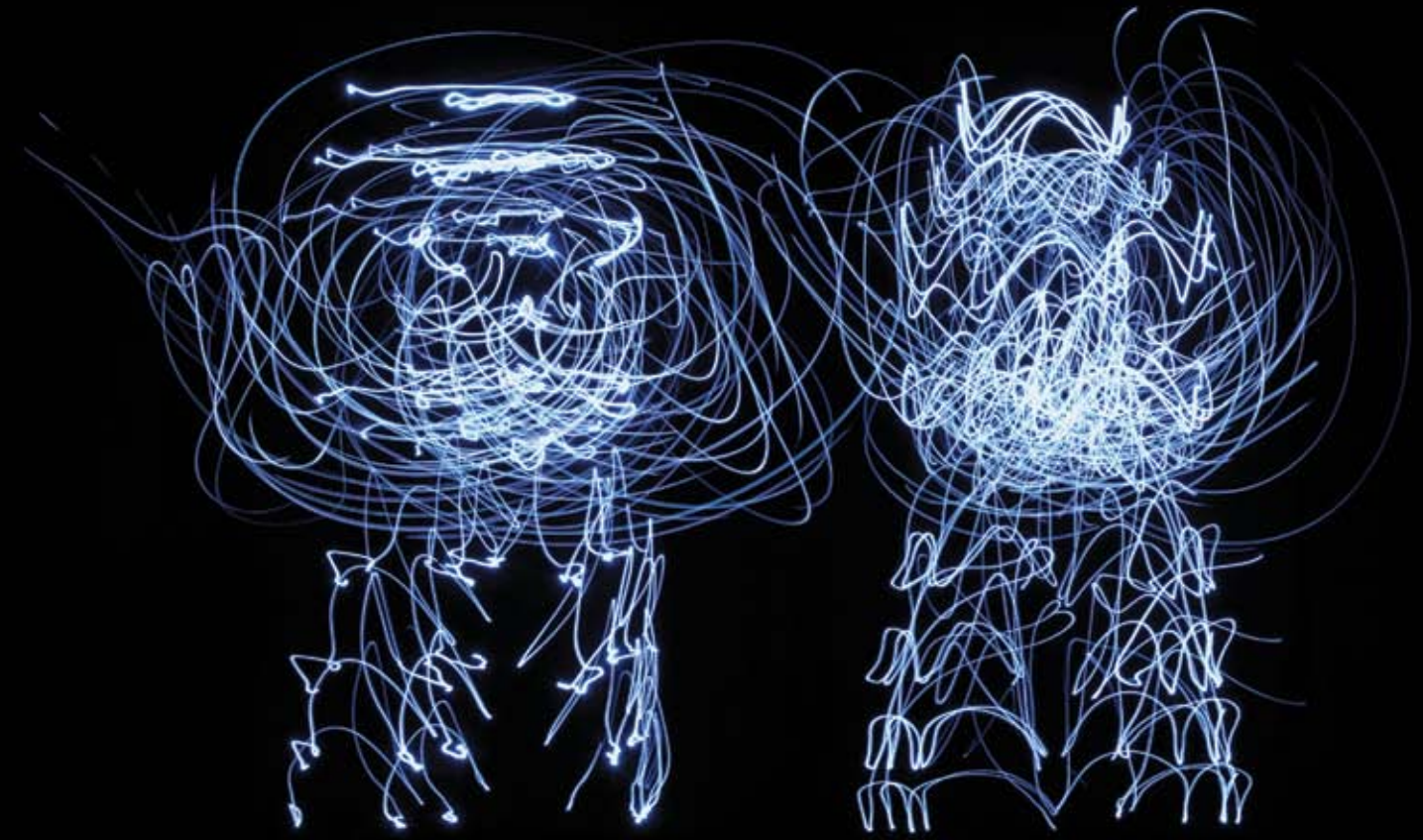
XLR8R IS PRINTED ON 100% RECYCLED FIBER ECOMATTE PLUS AND REINCARNATION MATTE PAPERS, WHICH ARE MANUFACTURED WITH ELECTRICITY OFFSET RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATES.

XLR8R Magazine is published 6 times a year by Amalgam Media, Inc. All writing, photographs, and artwork printed within the pages of XLR8R Magazine are copyright and property of Amalgam Media, Inc. and may only be reprinted with permission from the "I ain't no dopin' dope!" publisher. Please mail letters, charts, complaints, submissions, general information and review material to XLR8R Magazine, 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110, or fax us at 415.861.7584 or e-mail us at [letterbox@xlr8r.com](mailto:letterbox@xlr8r.com). XLR8R is a trademark of Amalgam Media, Inc.

XLR8R™ incite™ amalgam MEDIA

ISSN # 1526-4246 CSA # 1741454

# The Chemical Brothers



## FURTHER

### FIRST EVER CD/DVD OUT JUNE 8 ALL NEW MUSIC + VISUALS



## What's new at XLR8R.com

Exclusive music, videos, news, and extras from your favorite artists uploaded daily.

### PODCAST



#### PILOOSKI, TODD EDWARDS, PICTUREPLANE, GIRL UNIT

We're now up to two-count 'em, TWO!—exclusive *XLR8R* podcasts a week, so you've got no excuse to not keep up on the hottest new tracks ruling *XLR8R*'s world. First, debonair Parisian edit-king **Pilooski** graces us with some incredibly sensual lost *chansons* of the disco and folk variety, and he's quickly followed up by Denver's chill-house prince **Pictureplane**, who unleashes all sorts of danceable madness for the *XLR8R* cause. Then Jersey boy and US garage master **Todd Edwards** brings us one of his signature mixes of his own tunes to take you happily into the hot months. If that's not enough, the Bubblin'-featured **Girl Unit** does us up 45 funky minutes or so, too.

Get your dose of can't-miss hotness and sign up for our twice-weekly podcast at [XLR8R.com](http://XLR8R.com), where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum, including new sets from **Kyle Hall**, **Matt Shadetek**, **Teebs**, **MJ Cole**, and tons more.

[XLR8R.COM/PODCAST](http://XLR8R.COM/PODCAST)

#### NEW CONTENT EVERY DAY AT XLR8R.COM

Check out music news and features, free MP3 downloads, and reviews updated every day, plus photo blogs, music videos, free PDF versions of *XLR8R*, and a whole lot more at [XLR8R.COM](http://XLR8R.COM).

## XLR8R'S "SUMMER LOVE" CONTEST

TELL US YOUR FAVORITE SUMMER TUNES AND SNAG SOME AWESOME NEW ALBUMS AND ELM&OAK GEAR!

Summer: the one season that absolutely no one (well, most likely no one) hates. We all look forward to its long, brightly lit days so much that we even let the warm ideas that surround the particular time of year describe—sometimes even define—our favorite bands and songs. And with such a large amount of music being based around the idea of endless drunken summers, we thought it appropriate to ask what our readers' all-time favorite summer jams are.

Send us a list of your top five bands, albums, or songs to get down to during the summer months, with short blurbs about why they're your faves. Feel free to mix it up between new hits and old classics, and throw in whatever genres happen to be floating your boat. The contestants with the most interesting lists will score Bleep.com's North/South/East/West limited-edition photo-CD pack, a bunch of goodies from Shlohmo, Alex B and his Elm&Oak

line, Asura, Baths, Take, Robert Hood, and more. Tell us your top five summer jams and we'll help make it your best ever!

**Four winners will receive a prize pack of CDs, vinyl, and clothing from Shlohmo, Alex B and his Elm&Oak line, Asura, Baths, Take, and Robert Hood. One grand-prize winner will also get Bleep.com's North/South/East/West pack.**

**Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email, and must be received by September 10, 2010. Send your entry to: XLR8R's Summer Love Contest 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's Summer Love" in the subject line.**



#### JULY/AUGUST NO.134

The video for Azari & III's "Hungry for the Power"

Music from Actress, De Tropix, Mount Kimble, and more

Podcasts from Wolf + Lamb, Ghosts on Tape, Shlohmo, and Teebs

An *XLR8R TV* City Guide episode with Alex B in Denver

Diskjokke's Ultimate Beach Mix

[XLR8R.COM/134EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/134EXTRAS)



#### MAY/JUNE NO.133

Audio from our interviews with Deadbeat, Scuba, Ikonika, Virgo, and more

Music from DaVinci, Trailer Trash Tracys, James Blake, and more

An episode of *XLR8R TV* with Flying Lotus

Audio and video from The Crepes' Five Star

[XLR8R.COM/133EXTRAS](http://XLR8R.COM/133EXTRAS)



MIXER BY RANE. SOFTWARE BY SERATO. THE CROWD IS YOURS.

# NEVER MISS A BEAT

[WWW.SERATO.COM](http://WWW.SERATO.COM) - [WWW.RANE.COM](http://WWW.RANE.COM)

SCRATCH LIVE | serato || RANE

The Rane Sixty-Eight mixer will revolutionize the club DJing experience. Move crowds like never before with intuitive control and the flexibility to go wherever the music takes you.

Use two, three or four channels to build your sets, and blend seamlessly with the built-in DJ effects, designed specifically for the club environment.

For the first time ever, the Rane Sixty-Eight has two USB ports for back-to-back performances and easy change-over between DJs, so you'll never miss a beat.

Scratch Live customers get unlimited technical support, free software updates, online video tutorials, promotional music from [Whitelabel.net](http://Whitelabel.net), and larger than average crowds.







## ACTRESS

THE ZOMBY COLLABORATOR, REMIX CHAMP, AND WERK DISCS  
LABEL MANAGER MAKES A *SPLAZSH*.



"My DJing has changed a lot from when I was younger. I don't play as much... sorry! I'm playing football on the PlayStation," slurs the anonymous Actress as he tries to give an interview while simultaneously punting a digital ball across a digital field from his home in South London. The producer, DJ, and label manager grew up in Wolverhampton, a small city in the West Midlands region, where he did, consequently, play football as a teenager before sustaining an injury that cut his athletic career dramatically short. Since then, he's decided to give 100% of his attention to his other passion—electronic music—and this choice has worked out smashingly.

So named to toy with notions of gender, as well as the performative aspects of being a musician, Actress has remixed the likes of Joy Orbison, Alex Smoke, and Tom Trago, and maintains a reputation for playing varied DJ sets that encompass techno, house, hip-hop, boogie—whatever a particular night calls for. He currently runs Werk Discs, which has released records by a distinctly fresh crop of producers including Starkey, Lukid, and Disrupt, as well as his own debut LP, 2008's *Hazyville*. Werk also released Zomby's instant classic, *Where Were You in '92?*, which led to the mysterious beatsmith remixing Actress' "Paint, Straw and Bubbles" 12-inch as well as some one-off collaborations between the two, like "Nothing," a dubsteppy fog of a track drowning in heavy drum claps.

While *Hazyville* exhibited a cohesive sound and was a moody, forward-thinking take on techno, Actress' latest record, *Splazsh*, is an exercise in exponential

edits. "It's called *Splazsh* because, if you've got a brush with paint on it and you throw it at the canvas, it's just going to fragment and sparkle and spray—and that's kind of how I saw the tracks," he explains.

To craft the album, Actress says he was constantly altering sounds in real time. "Always Human" takes bits of a Human League song and reconfigures them into an entirely new creation, a happy, bumping house tune with crunchy hits and unintelligible vocals. Other tracks, like the otherworldly, epically jackin' "Hubble," "tend to evolve from one point—maybe a sample that, at the end of it, is no longer there," he describes. "And I'm not quite sure exactly how. It's kind of gotten to the point [where] it's just melted and smelted down."

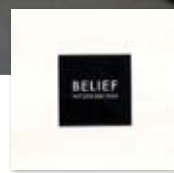
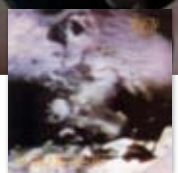
To amp up for some live sets this summer—for which he's figuring out how to balance material from both albums—Actress' PlayStation has been helpful. "Things like this are training for me because it just sharpens how you press keys on a MIDI keyboard, it sharpens how you play notes, it sharpens how you see sound in terms of movement and 3D," he says. He's also been reading books on visual artists Claude Monet, Francis Bacon, and Henri Matisse, gaining inspiration for future tunes. "Hopefully you've fed the mind enough to come with something fresh and relevant to what's going on in contemporary music," he muses. If *Splazsh* is any indication, Actress won't have any problems in that department.

◦ *SPLAZSH* IS OUT NOW ON HONEST JON'S.  
[MYSFACE.COM/ACTRESSKHZ](http://MYSFACE.COM/ACTRESSKHZ)



# GHOSTS ON TAPE

SAN FRANCISCO BASS ASSASSIN RYAN MERRY DISCUSSES THE INDUSTRIAL ALBUMS THAT WARPED HIS TEENAGE MIND.



**Throbbing Gristle**  
*Assume Power Focus*  
Brutal, borderline obnoxious, completely fucked. The OGs of noise music sprinkled this harsh record with a few bits that could be considered proto-techno. Then Genesis P-Orridge spews crazy sauce all over the mix, talking about murder and how conformity sucks and all that jazz. Fun times!

**Skinny Puppy**  
*Cleanse, Fold and Manipulate*  
Sooo dark. Not SP's most popular one, but one of the best. "First Aid" and "Second Tooth" rank with some of their greatest. The complexity in their arrangements is mind-boggling, especially considering it was before the age of music software. This album feels like Halloween.

**Ministry**  
*The Land of Rape and Honey*  
This one holds up remarkably well. Although I generally don't listen to angry or aggressive music these days, I can say that almost every track here is brilliant. "Hizbollah" is a huge highlight, and I sort of want to do a reggaeton remix of "You Know What You Are."

**My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult**  
*Confessions of a Knife*  
The audio equivalent of a John Waters flick—if John Waters dabbled in Satanism, that is. "The Days of Swine and Roses" might be the perfect goth/industrial dance track. I actually went to one of their shows and my mom was there. No shit.

**Nitzer Ebb**  
*Belief*  
Mostly this album for me is all about "Control, I'm Here." What a classic jam. I'd love to find a way to slip it into a DJ set, but sadly, that moment has yet to come.

[myspace.com/ghostsontapesf](http://myspace.com/ghostsontapesf)  
**GO**  
Listen to Ghosts On Tape's exclusive podcast at [XLR8R.com/134extras](http://XLR8R.com/134extras).



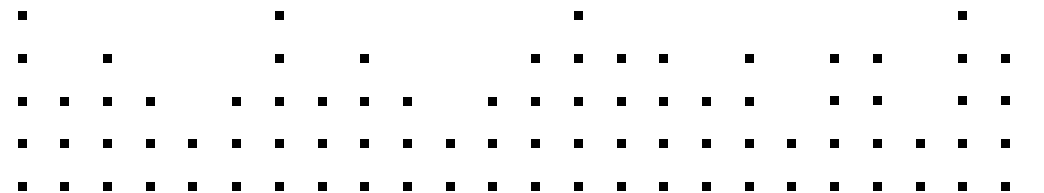
## THE NEXT EPISODE.

**MASCHINE** is the next episode in professional beat production. It combines the hands-on feel and sequencing of classic grooveboxes with advanced sampling, effects, and seamless DAW integration. New features include 6GB of production-ready sounds, MPC library import, 16 Levels, and vintage MPC60/SP 1200\* character – over 50 enhancements in all. MASCHINE continues to evolve so you can focus on creating the perfect beat.

[www.native-instruments.com/maschine](http://www.native-instruments.com/maschine)



\*MPC60 is a trademark of Native Instruments, LLC. SP 1200 is a trademark of E-mu Systems, Inc. Trademarks used only to identify the equipment whose sound was sampled and does not imply an official endorsement.



# TENNAKE

A HAMBURG PRODUCER SLITHERS BETWEEN BYGONE ERAS  
AND FUNKY SOUNDS.



Marco Niemerski, the Hamburg, Germany native known musically as Tensnake, doesn't mind when people point out his influences—he is, indeed, trying to make his music sound like the records he loves. "I get really excited when I come close to a point where it sounds like that," he says, and this excitement translates viscerally into the irrepressible joy that his tracks evoke on the dancefloor.

Niemerski's work isn't exactly pop, but the immediacy of what he does is just as important to him as the level of craft. This partly explains why there's no Tensnake album quite yet. At the time of our phone conversation, the affable Niemerski is at home between gigs, soon to complete the last remix he has slated for the year. Until now, he's preferred to release EPs and 12-inches, citing the speed of expression that those formats allow. An album will come—he's worked at it before—but he's too much of a perfectionist to hurry it. "I have to restart again and get some inspiration first," he explains. "I'll wait until

I feel it's the right time to do it."

One can't fault him for working at his own pace—his quality control to date has been impeccable. Recreating and reimagining the old, but never recycling wholesale, the Tensnake singles and EPs of the last few years are a happy confluence of warm, vintage disco, boogie, and house sounds filtered through a Larry Levan-like lens of funky eclecticism. That said, Niemerski doesn't self-identify as a DJ. "I used to DJ some years ago, then I quit," he says with a laugh. "There are so many good DJs out there... I don't think the world needs another one."

Even as a producer, Tensnake shuns the idea of playing others' sounds. For instance, it'll occasionally seem like he has employed, say, a keyboard sample from a classic '80s house track, but it's nearly always a sound that he has generated himself. "If you're using samples in a creative way, that's fine, but playing everything and making it sound like a sample is more interesting to me," he explains. This process of reshaping his

favorite records' sounds has lately resulted in *Coma Cat*, an EP that feels fresh yet bears few marks of the present. "Need Your Lovin'" has the nostalgic glow of a Chaz Jankel disco cut, while the title track shuns subtlety in favor of tropical-tinged keys and house jubilation. Meanwhile, the warmth of 2008 space-disco track "Congola" would dovetail nicely with Lindström's most futuristic jams.

While his music often references the past, Tensnake is mostly definitely rooted in the present—next up is a release for Tim Sweeney's Beats in Space label, and Niemerski's own label, Mirau Musik, will be releasing a few records by younger producers this year. As Niemerski observes with delight, clubs everywhere seem to be catching up with his fun-loving mindset. "You find a lot of house music again... there are so many more melodies. People don't care if it's minimal or this or that—they just dance, party, and have fun."

# BEATPORT. TO-GO.



**Introducing Beatport mobile. Another great reason to stare at your phone.** Now that you have access to the entire Beatport music catalog from your web-enabled mobile phone, you may never look away. Simply log in, browse, listen, and add music to your cart, all from the palm of your hand. Visit the iTunes App Store or [beatport.com](http://beatport.com) from your mobile device to get started.

**beatport** Beatport.com  
Log On. Get Down.

iPhone app available worldwide from the iTunes App Store.  
iTunes and iPhone are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

Proud Partners with:  
**NI** NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

# LABELS WE LOVE

A SAMPLING OF THE INDIE IMPRINTS THAT ARE CURRENTLY TURNING HEADS.



DRE SKULL AND LIL SCRAPPY. PHOTO BY PORTS BISHOP

## MIXPAK RECORDS

HEAD HONCHO **DRE SKULL** UPDATES BROOKLYN'S DANCEHALL COLLABO BLUEPRINTS.

Not since the days of Bobby Konders' and Kenny "Dope" Gonzalez's ragga-hip-hop hybrids of the early to mid-'90s has the US-Jamaica bashment connection seemed so energized as it does with Brooklyn producer Dre Skull's Mixpak label. Earlier this year, Dre Skull paired hot gyaal Jamaican deejay Natalie Storm with UK producer Sticky's Jumeirah Riddim for the single "Look Pon Me," which became a massive UK funky hit. But in his short stint running Mixpak, Dre Skull has also collaborated with big dancehall artists from Ms. Thing to Vybz Kartel.

Dre first linked with Jamaican artists when he contacted gruff-voiced Rasta singjay Sizzla for 2009's energetic "Gone Too Far." The Cleveland-born producer, who was inspired by Lee "Scratch" Perry's studio techniques and the Jamaican concept of "versions" (re-using rhythm tracks), got into dancehall via Yellowman, Sister Nancy, and

Super Cat. "I think it's cool that [Super Cat] linked up with the New York rap world," he says.

But Dre is quick to mention that he does more than just dancehall-club hybrids. He has worked with Southern rappers Lil Scrappy and Sissy Nobby, produced Baltimore club jams with MC Juiceboxxx, and released his own rave-influenced tracks. Still, he plans to continue working with Jamaican acts and plans to visit Kingston this month. "If everything comes together, I'll be working out of Shaggy's [Big Yard] studio and recording with a bunch of folks, including Busy Signal, Elephant Man, and Natalie Storm," he says.

So how do Jamaican artists react when he plays them his uptempo electro-dance material, which sounds more like Dave Aude than Dave Kelly? "[They] are pretty open-minded in terms of the sound palate," he explains, adding that Jamaican music has "a long history of embracing studio

technology and pushing it to its limits—whether it's reverb, delay, drum machines, synths, or Auto-Tune." He thinks it's what contributes to their openness to new rhythms and tempos and keeps dancehall vibrant.

Another surprise has been the extended life of Dre Skull's single with dancehall icon Vybz Kartel. The "Yuh Love" video has a million hits on YouTube and was recently licensed to Jamaican label Tad's, bringing things full circle. So while his Jamaican productions continue to pop, he's also starting music projects with artists from Belize, the UK, and Atlanta, all of which suits Dre Skull's expansive styles. Or as he says, "I'm keeping it varied—I love music, not genres." *Tomas Palermo*

New EPs and singles from Dre Skull, Lil Scrappy, Cory Blaine, and Oliver Twizt arrive in July on Mixpak. [dreskull.com](http://dreskull.com), [mixpakrecords.com](http://mixpakrecords.com)

## WOLF + LAMB MUSIC

A BROOKLYN **DJ/PRODUCER/PROMOTER/LABEL COLLECTIVE** DISGUISES ITS VICIOUSLY DEEP BEATS IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.



To say that there's a mythology surrounding Wolf + Lamb's parties is a gross understatement. "Eli from Soul Clap always says that [it was] only after they came to one of our parties that they really got what we're about," explains Gadi Mizrahi, one half of the NYC-based promoter/label/producer/DJ duo.

Along with partner Zev Eisenberg, Mizrahi has been honing what can only be referred to as the Wolf + Lamb brand over the course of eight years, and it's grown out of some unlikely places—like Burning Man, for one, where the pair infects the Playa with actual tasteful music and good DJs. "The first year, we had a small soundsystem set up outside our RV," Eisenberg recounts. Then they met an artist who'd constructed a 40-foot replica of Marcel Duchamp's urinal, and moved to the party to his camp. "People would climb in from this drainpipe into our little party." Five years later, W+L's desert outing has become an oasis of good music in Black Rock City. But do they take shit from serious music folks for their sand-covered soirées? "We get flak from techno people about all sorts of shit," says Eisenberg. "So it's okay."

Their "whatever works" mentality for their music doesn't mean they ever eschew good taste. Their 50-person-capacity residency at Brooklyn's Marcy Hotel brings only the most diehard fans, and Mizrahi notes that it's these parties that have the greatest influence on what they release on their label. "It's really tough to find a better atmosphere," he offers, waxing ecstatic about current and former residents like Lee Curtiss, Soul Clap, and Deniz Kurtel going deep on the tiny dancefloor—all of whom have, in different capacities, seen their names on Wolf + Lamb releases. "If we play a new track and impress a seasoned morning shift at the Marcy, you know it's gold," Eisenberg intones.

What's up next, though, is their brand-new debut full-length, *Love Someone*. "It's 10 tracks that work their way across a lot of different moods," Eisenberg explains. "It's an intimate picture of our music, and definitely a lot of music that only fits on an album." *Ken Taylor*

*Love Someone* is out now on Wolf + Lamb. [wolflambmusic.com](http://wolflambmusic.com)

● **3 AT 3** A TRIO OF **YOUNG LABELS** EACH WITH LESS THAN A HANDFUL OF RELEASES.

### Grizzly

London, UK

Between his influential radio show on London's Kiss 100, his production and remix work, and his diverse DJ sets, few artists have been as instrumental as Graeme Sinden in bringing new sounds to the dancefloor. Now, he's taken those efforts a step further with the launch of his own Grizzly label, whose artistic vision is open-minded and loosely defined—if Sinden likes it, he'll put it out. The label kicked off with a collaborative release from Sinden and SBTRKT, which was followed by the *Arnold Classics* EP from French electro producer Brodinski. The most recent record was the debut EP from Wafa, which offers a warped, bass-loaded take on Italo. The label may be in its infancy now, but plenty more releases are planned, including the debut from Bassanova—a new collaboration between Jubilee and Grahmzilla of Thunderheist—and something from France's Jay Weed.

### PTN

Stowmarket, UK

Given the astronomical mutation rate within the UK garage/dubstep/funky continuum, it comes as little surprise that even niche labels find the need to launch new imprints to properly promote the latest emerging sounds. Such is the case with PTN, a new venture recently started by Tom Kerridge, who also runs the highly respected RAMP and BRAiNMATH labels. After hearing so much new, quality UK funky and house that didn't have a proper home, Kerridge decided to launch PTN, beginning with *Deadly Rhythms*, the debut EP from Welsh producer Doc Daneeka, and quickly following that with an EP from Hackman. This month saw a release from Icelandic producer Hypno, and DJs everywhere are anxiously awaiting the label's upcoming fourth record, Breach's "Fatherless," which is already being rinsed by the scene's most influential figures. Championing a stripped-down, house-oriented sound, future PTN releases are in the works from Deep Teknologi and Procedure, along with second servings of Doc Daneeka and Hackman.

### SoftSpot Music

Brooklyn, NY

Nancy Tovar wasn't looking to start a record label, she just really thought someone needed to reissue Belgian post-punk band AA. While hunting online for music by the similarly named Aa, she stumbled across the song "Suicide Fever," loved it, began investigating its origins, and ultimately traced it back to a 1981 7", the group's only release. After making contact with the band, she launched SoftSpot Music in early 2009 and reissued the 7", which quickly sold out. That was followed by the debut 7" from Brooklyn's The Sediment Club, a teenage no-wave outfit with a frontman whose parents played in The Voidoids and The Bush Tetras. Last month saw the label's first 12", another reissue of some choice early '80s Belgian post-punk from long-lost band Kebab. Operating out of Tovar's bedroom on a project-by-project basis, SoftSpot doesn't have much of a master plan moving ahead, but future releases will likely involve more jangly guitars and sexy basslines.

# DE TROPICX

M.I.A.'S BACKING VOCALIST TAKES HER OWN HYPE  
TO THE NEXT LEVEL.



"Cherry B" Byron might be most well known as M.I.A.'s hot-stepping hype girl, but, as one half of De Tropicx, she isn't ever content playing second fiddle. A partnership with DJ/producer Damon Bowen (a.k.a. Damon Alexander; formerly DJ Instinct), De Tropicx cooks up a hyperactive blend of dancehall and global beats, infused with tinges of lovers rock and even country, which takes a decidedly in-your-face approach to the dancefloor. But to Bowen, it's "just good ol' skankin' music."

Bowen and Byron met through mutual friends while attending university in the UK. Bowen, who had already jump-started his musical career DJing on pirate radio and at venues around London, was studying at Thames Valley University in Ealing; meanwhile, Byron, a trained choreographer and singer, was studying music and performing arts at Fulham & Chelsea College, and working on music videos on both sides of the pond. After about a year running in the same social circles, the two finally connected over their complementary artistic abilities. "Then when we found out we [were] both Vincentians, it was over!" Byron recalls, of

their shared Saint Vincent heritage.

The two hit it off immediately and soon began collaborating and performing together as De Tropicx. Rather than a regimented approach, they instead bring an insatiable curiosity and the need for a good time. "We're both strong characters, says Bowen, who spins the beats and tag-teams with Cherry on the mic. "Cherry is a wicked front woman; she gets the crowd involved, and she's got moves for days."

De Tropicx's style is a compelling "musical soundclash" pulling from the changing influences in both members' well-traveled lives. "[We] have tuned into the vibes of our surroundings," says Byron. "Our music displays just that." Thrown into this mix is Byron's Caribbean upbringing and Bowen's childhood surrounded by a lively blend of calypso, soca, country, classical music, and pop in Luton, UK. Bowen also dabbled in hardcore and hip-hop à la NWA, Public Enemy, Pete Rock, Nas, and Wu-Tang as a teenager in his pirate-radio days before eventually moving into the London electronic scene, where he tapped into favorites Ray Keith, Nookie, and

DJ Hype. He loves to mess around with new equipment, and is still constantly digging around uncharted musical territory. "It's amazing what you come across in the local charity shop vinyl section," he says. All these influences inevitably turn up in the duo's club-ready tropical and dancehall tracks, such as singles "Oy Ya Yoy (Oi Oi Oi)" and "Bad Name."

De Tropicx's highly anticipated debut full-length studio album has been a long time in the making. Byron refers to it as an eclectic "mixture of melodies that bounce in collision with the duttiest bassline"—or simply "sexy ragga." The duo has been busy piecing together tracks with guest producers such as friend Nick Philpin, Parisian underground producer Blackjoy, JC, and Black Russian. De Tropicx also hopes to nab some guest appearances from long-standing friend Elly Jackson (from La Roux) and "Vincy" celebs Mandrike and Minkah of Mystik Vibration.

So, what, no M.I.A.?

"If we missed an opportunity for a feature there, that would be silly," adds Bowen.

◊ DE TROPICX'S DEBUT LP IS EXPECTED LATER THIS YEAR. MYSPACE.COM/DETROPICX

art, musique

art, musique

art, musique



**crossfade LP**  
metal . high-definition . over-ear headphones

**v-moda**

available at the Apple Store and v-moda.com

# ENDLESS SUMMER

HOT PIECES FOR EVEN HOTTER WEATHER



1



2



3



4



7



6



5

- 1. Sabrina Dehoff Rope Necklace 14 / \$265 / [goodhoodstore.com](http://goodhoodstore.com)
- 2. Las Jewelry Oxidized Bronze Gazelle Ring / \$129 / [oaknyc.com](http://oaknyc.com)
- 3. Norse Projects High Rise Chino Shorts / \$98 / [goodsoph.myshopify.com](http://goodsoph.myshopify.com)
- 4. Karen Walker Eyewear Rover Glasses / \$225 / [goodhoodstore.com](http://goodhoodstore.com)
- 5. Wood Wood Kim Jong-il Shirt / \$52 / [farfetch.com](http://farfetch.com)
- 6. Gregory Kletter Day Pack - Tan / \$150 / [goodhoodstore.com](http://goodhoodstore.com)
- 7. Acne Arch S/S 10 Denim Shoe / \$149 / [shop.acnestudios.com](http://shop.acnestudios.com)

# dubspot

Redefining Music Education. Again...

Experience Our New Online Courses This Fall!

Ableton, Native Instruments, Reason 5

10.10.2010



dubspot.com



# soul to soul

THOUSANDS OF MILES AND DECADES REMOVED FROM THE CITY'S GLORY DAYS, MINIMAL MASTER **ROBERT HOOD** TAKES THE SPIRIT OF DETROIT INTO THE FUTURE

WORDS [WALTER WASACZ](#) PHOTOS [NICK HELDERMAN](#)



## WHEN

Robert Hood came of age in Detroit, radical change was in the air. People, ideas, and product were on the move. The 1960s and '70s were marked by political and cultural swings, growing black empowerment, and abandonment by second- and third-generation ethnic whites on one hand; urban guerrilla creativity busting out across the racial spectrum on the other.

The auto industry lorded over the economic landscape, blotting out whatever there was of the mid-north sun, which came instead as music played, sung, and produced by Motown: the great equalizer.

"Everyone listened to it on the radio, which didn't segregate between black or white, rich or poor," says Hood, who was born in 1965, around the time that AM stations like Windsor's CKLW (Detroit's Canadian neighbor to the *south*) and Dearborn's WKNR were playing *everything*: The Miracles and The Marvelettes, Mitch Ryder and Bob Seger, The Beatles and The Stones. "It was just music, man. Good music, that we were exposed to day and night. But it was Motown that was the sound of the inner city for me."

Later he got his inspiration from stations WGPR and WJLB—where crypto-on-air personality Charles Johnson (a.k.a. The Electrifying Mojo) recombined pop rhythms from all over the world, mixing them with Detroit soul fire to mold the raw foundation for techno.

"I can't tell you enough times, and I know this story has been told before, but Detroit radio is what influenced all of us to do our own thing," Hood says. "We might not have known what we were doing exactly, but Mojo helped expose us to new worlds. He was like our teacher, telling us 'there are no boundaries.'"

And pure, raw techno with no boundaries is what Robert Hood is all about. Dubbing his own reductive groove community "the minimal nation" a solid 20 years ago, his story is one of the most enduring in over a quarter century of electronic music history. He was one third of the original Underground Resistance with Mike Banks and Jeff Mills (tip: check 1991's fierce *X-101* LP), then broke off to nurture his own independent career as producer and DJ. He moved to New York, started his own M-Plant label, recorded and released tracks on Mills' Axis and Berlin's Tresor imprints, and then cruised into a new century where the next generation of minimal was waiting for him. But his heart and soul remained in old Detroit. Still does, in fact.

From the early-to-late 1970s, Hood heard jazz, blues, new wave, glam rock, synth-pop, disco, embryonic rap, and hip-hop in interstellar overdrive—just by tuning his radio dial. His favorite Detroit artists were Marvin Gaye and The Temptations, but it was another mammoth track of the era that grabbed his ear and never let go: Isaac Hayes' "Theme From Shaft."



"IT'S A STRIPPED-DOWN NARRATIVE ABOUT THE SOUL, FROM THE SOUL."



IT'S COMMUNICATION FROM A HIGHER POWER."



"From the first time I heard it, I was just overwhelmed by the way the sounds were introduced. The strings, the horns, drums, and funky guitar riff," he says. "Then his voice rolls in and off you go. Man! To me, that was the start of thinking in terms of 'minimal.' Just taking basic elements and making a track work by using less, not more."

Though based in Alabama since 2004, Hood still describes himself as a "black kid from Detroit," who grew up on the city's sprawling Northwest side populated with auto workers, machinists, dye makers, handymen, city workers, merchants, playground ballers—not to mention a bunch of kids fooling around with electronic music-making hardware.

Once a residential destination for working-class families, Hood's neighborhood as a teenager was an urban bedroom community with good shopping options and public schools holding their own. Tour the area on foot now and you see a Detroit that appears suspended in that era. Single-family brick houses built as

early as the 1920s through the 1940s still line the long blocks. But some of the homes are gone, with the industrial shops and commercial strips laid to waste. One of America's great avenues, Grand River, dissects Northwest Detroit as it links downtown with suburbia. Some of it is intact, other parts charred and being readied for federally subsidized demolition.

It is along this diagonal spoke that fellow electronic dance pioneers Kelli Hand, Mike Huckaby, and Anthony "Shake" Shakir lived (Hand, Huckaby, Shakir, and Hood all attended nearby Cooley High School), close enough to walk or ride a bike to Cliff Thomas' influential Buy-Rite Records. The shop on 7 Mile Road did on the ground what radio did for local air space: filled it with imports by Kraftwerk, Depeche Mode, and Heaven 17; US indie 12s by The B-52's, Prince, and Devo; emerging deep Detroit sides by Cybotron and Model 500, Rhythm is Rhythim and Inner City.

Add to that the spaced-out rock-soul hybrids

of George Clinton's P-Funk dynasty and acid-house mayhem by way of Chicago, and there you have it: the blueprint for the shapeshifting of things to come.

"Detroit was a hip place, very culturally *avant garde*," he says. "It was a rough place, but musically sophisticated. I think that kind of pressure that came from both sides helped make it unique. We had the radio, we had the records. We felt something different going on around us and we seized on it."

Hood says he began experimenting with his "theory of reducing dance music to an essence" after he puzzled over what first-generation Detroit techno artists like Juan Atkins, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson, and Eddie Fowlkes were producing.

"I couldn't make it out, to be honest with you," Hood says. "It was a new, exciting sound, but it had a vibe you had to catch up to, like it came out of the future or from another galaxy. I tried to break it down so I could bring out the most important element: the African drum."

It might be a slightly revisionist view to suggest that Detroit techno was the soundtrack for post-industrial decline and social breakdown of the world's most prolific factory town. Transportation to another place via danceable electronic waveforms threatens to become cliché the more the myth circulates around the globe. But hearing Hood talk about it adds a bold truth to the mythology.

"As I was growing up, the city started to empty out, the present was a place where you just had to try to survive," he says. "The Reagan era was the height of the crack era in Detroit. The '80s were a destructive period, time stood still except for the violence, the city stopped functioning. If you wanted to get out of that, you had to dig down and find something in the subconscious, something deeper and more beautiful. That's how we first started traveling—in our own minds."

Set free by repetitive beats, fleshed out with militant rhetoric from the UR camp—not so militant as it turned out, more about rebuilding

community life and discipline amid rising poverty, decay, and desolation in the city—Hood challenged the future by staying lean and mean in his music. Go into his catalog that has remained consistently roots- and soul-oriented after well over 100 original tracks, remixes, mixtapes and mixed CDs, podcasts, and bootlegged live sessions, and you will detect a steady hand at the controls.

Hood's genius is stretching a single, brilliant idea over two decades of productive work. Put on a classic M-Plant track from *Minimal Nation* (originally issued in 1994, re-released last year) like "Museum" or "One Touch" and contrast it with new material on this summer's apocalyptic *Omega*, and you'll find its structure and texture eerily alike.

But thematically, a shift is apparent. The work is based on 1971 science-fiction cult film *The Omega Man*, which stars Charlton Heston as a scientist who survives a global plague after biological warfare kills off most the planet's human population. Those that survive have

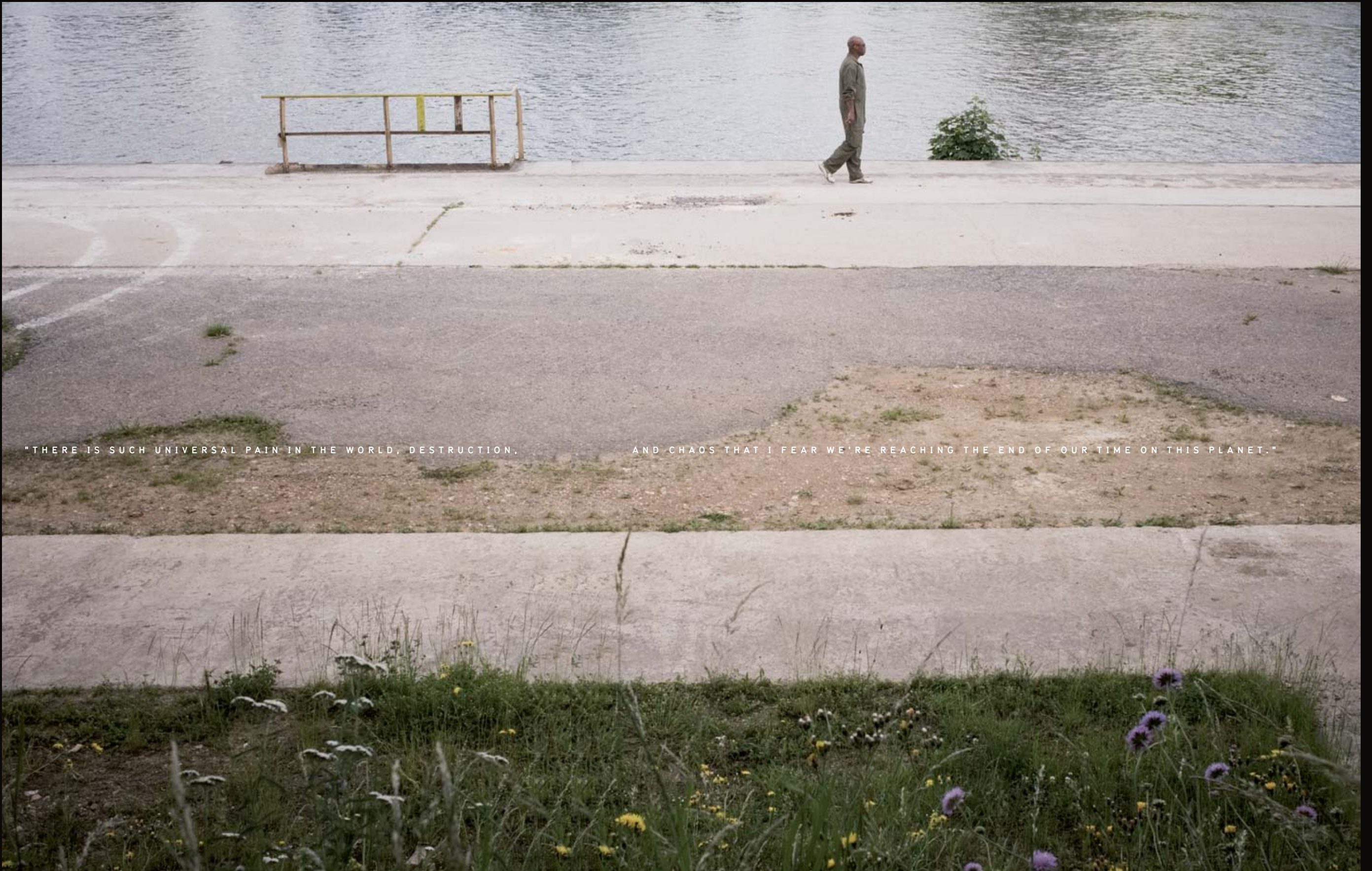
become mutants who want to kill the scientist, who represents a failed age of technology gone amok. There are biblical allusions strewn throughout the film, which includes a symbolic crucifixion at its climax.

Hood says he's always been enamored with the film, and how it presents both sides of a grim scenario for humanity. He can just as easily put himself in the position of the scientist/hero as he can the "villains" who seek a more "pure and spiritual" existence, however misguided.

"I saw the movie when I was a kid, and later I related to the main character because he was alone in the world—and producing techno can be an interior, lonely life," he says. "But now, I see it in much deeper spiritual terms. Like this is part of a prophecy we're seeing realized almost every day."

How so?

"There is such universal pain in the world, destruction, and chaos that I fear we're reaching the end of our time on this planet,"



"THERE IS SUCH UNIVERSAL PAIN IN THE WORLD, DESTRUCTION,

AND CHAOS THAT I FEAR WE'RE REACHING THE END OF OUR TIME ON THIS PLANET."

he says. "I wanted to make an album that reflected an evolution of how I've come to see things like that spiritually. This isn't like a sudden revelation, but something I've been thinking about and acting on as an artist since the late 1990s."

Hood lives close to the Gulf of Mexico and says he was profoundly disturbed by the April oil spill that history may record as one of the worst man-made ecological disasters ever. He is saddened by conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the current quality of modern life in this country. "We're so disconnected in how we communicate, by using computers and the internet, we don't know anybody, really, anymore," he says. "It's changed us all. I wanted *Omega* to reflect a serious tone, not just something made for people to dance to in the club."

But dance to it in the club, they will, largely due to Hood's time-tested and infectious cut-and-run style. After its somber, dare say, dark ambient beginnings with "The Plague (Cleansing Maneuvers)," Hood reaches for his African drum and seduces body and soul on the crushing "Towns That Disappeared Completely," which recalls UR as much as it does the aqua-electro acid of fellow Detroiters Drexciya. The next track, "Alpha," is almost entirely constructed from drums and bass vibrations before a simple one-note synthetic symphony rises out of the rumbling low end and hangs out on top for a beautiful finish.

"The Workers of Iniquity" is funk reduced to fat, loopy patterns, and "Are You God?" quickens the pulse by layering drums over more drums, slashing and stabbing with synth lines that actually come close to the wicked rhythm-guitar lead on "Shaft." The deeper you go, the darker it gets. "The Family Watches" approaches schizoid-paranoid territory. Strange sounds dance around a tight, rolling bass drum, which ultimately gives way to even stranger, almost alien melodies. Pay heed to the killer drum outro. "The Wheels of Escape" also seems possessed of alien-sounding bleeps, which drive the tune forward on the back of multiple percussion.

The final piece, "Omega (End Times)," sounds scarier than it really is, more like a cautionary tale told at 180 BPMs, with thunderclaps, and a bridge made up of a chorus of melodic synths that creates anticipation for the final instrumental surge—a frantic, manic release, before a soothing fade to black.

Hood says *Omega* is also indirectly a response to the minimal techno scene that broke wide open in the mid-'00s, largely in Europe, leaving bits of sonic residue on the Detroit sound. The bigger influence is on the party experience itself, which turned away from quality to quantity in the form of marathon events seemingly without end.

"What's missing in all that is the meaning and substance of the music itself," he says. "Anyone can turn on a laptop now and make a track and call it 'minimal.' But to me, that music became overly complicated, which is not what it's supposed to be about. I'm glad people are enjoying the party, but it's more than just that. It's a stripped-down narrative about the soul, from the soul. It's communication from a higher power." ■



# beat happ- eni- ng



FROM THE SEEDS PLANTED BY FLYING LOTUS, DAEDELUS, AND LOW END THEORY,  
**LA'S ABSTRACT INSTRUMENTAL SCENE** BRANCHES OUTWARD

I t's Wednesday night, and the scene at LA's Airliner Club is typical: A sea of nodding baseball caps; empty Pabst tallboys lining the bar; speaker stacks blasting out waves of wobbly, ribcage-rattling bass. This is Low End Theory, and thanks to the rise of Flying Lotus, it's arguably the hottest club in the US right now. Certainly the crowd seems to think so—the place is packed, and the atmosphere is celebratory. Mary Anne Hobbs, the BBC Radio DJ who is this scene's biggest overseas advocate, is headlining, and FlyLo's latest album, *Cosmogramma*, is already well on its way to making LA beat music a global phenomenon. Tonight, this dive bar on the outskirts of downtown Los Angeles feels like the center of the universe.

Warming up the crowd for Hobbs is a talented newcomer from the Valley named Will Wiesenfeld (a.k.a. Baths). Wiesenfeld is almost absurdly new to the scene—the first beat event he ever attended was a one-off called Destroy LA that took place in September of last year. After his experimental band, Post-Foetus, performed early, he stuck around to catch sets by FlyLo, Gaslamp Killer, and Daedelus—and had an epiphany. "I was just freaking out for the entire evening," he remembers. "I was like, 'Oh my God, I need to be able to do that; I need to be able to move that many people completely on my own.'" So he ditched the band—and several years' worth of music—and set about creating his solo project, Baths.

Less than a year later, Baths is signed to Anticon and playing his first gig at Low End Theory—the first night of a four-week residency. His debut album, *Cerulean*, lands this month, yet even in May, Mary Anne Hobbs already had it in heavy rotation. Wiesenfeld, who is all of 21, still can't quite believe any of it. "Everybody is on my side and trying to make things happen for me," he says of the beat scene, which Daedelus introduced him to after discovering Post-Foetus' one and only album, released on a tiny Malaysian label called Mü-Nest. "And it's so surreal, because I've been making music on my own for such a long time—like, assembling a band and trying to get shows and not being able to figure all of these things out. But it's like a team of people behind me now. It's so, so cool."

It's not just Baths who's benefiting from the beat scene's inclusive M.O. All over LA and beyond, young producers are plugging into the growing network surrounding Low End Theory, the dublab radio collective, and Alpha Pup, the record label and distribution company run by Low End promoter Daddy Kev. And already, they're transforming

beat music in ways not even FlyLo could have envisioned.

Maybe it's a generation raised on the ADD jump-cuts of Michael Bay movie trailers. Maybe it's the advent of Ableton Live and other apps that make music editing easier than tagging a freeway overpass. Whatever the reason, younger heads that, only a few years ago, would have been blazing up to the abstract rhymes of Madlib and Freestyle Fellowship are now getting rowdy to the abstract beats of FlyLo and his disciples. And where many electronic music scenes too often choke on their own conventions (bloghouse, anyone?), the beat scene seems to thrive on innovation. "At Low End Theory, you can put on anything and they're like, 'This is weird as fuck! I love it!'" marvels Baths. "The crazier it is, the more people are into it."

With his first-ever Low End set, Baths proves his own observation. His best-known track, "Hall," comes on like a dubstep remix of Passion Pit, all tumbling beats, falsetto vocals, and blissed-out synths. Pitchfork calls it a beat/chillwave hybrid, which Wiesenfeld doesn't mind ("I love Toro y Moi...if that is considered chillwave, then I'm totally flattered to be any part of that," he says). Whatever you want to call it, it's a far cry from Low End's usual bungee-like bass drops—and the beat kids are eating it up.

"It didn't used to be like that," says Leeor Brown, who runs the Friends of Friends label and also works at Terrorbird Media as Baths' publicist. "Watching the [Low End] crowd now is mind-boggling." One of the Low End scene's most veteran producers, Take, agrees. Back in 2003, Take and some other LA producers, led by a British expat named Justin "Kutmah" McNulty, were doing an instrumental hip-hop night called Sketchbook that became an early stomping ground for the beat scene's most influential figures—FlyLo, Daedelus, Ras G, Gaslamp Killer, Dibiase, and so many other future movers and shakers that Take struggles to remember all their names.

"We would hang out in the parking lot," remembers Take, who prefers not to use his real name. "One of us would be playing records inside, and it just evolved into this thing where producers started bringing their beats, and Dibiase would bring a boombox, and we would all sit outside... It was all guys, lots of weed smoke, and basically just producers sitting around listening to each other's beats."

But Sketchbook, it turned out, was just a little too ahead of its time. Besides the inner circle of producers, only a few fans would show up each week, and most of them were baffled. "People would walk up to the DJ booth and say, 'Man, play some hip-hop,'" Take remembers. "We're like, 'This *is* hip-hop. This is the new shit.' And people were like,



BATHS

"I WAS JUST FREAKING OUT FOR THE ENTIRE EVENING"—BATHS

---

'Nah, we can't dance to it.' MCs would come through and want to rap and we'd just be like, 'No. No rappers, no MCs—strictly instrumental.' So the night just sort of pitted out."

Less than a year after the Sketchbook crew called it quits, Daddy Kev started Low End Theory and "literally picked up where Sketchbook left off—with much better promotion, much better sound," says Take. "You know, we were all just stoned producers just wanting to hear music. We had no experience with promoting. So what Low End did was just take that aesthetic and blow it up."

Among the younger LA beat producers, the one who seems likeliest to blow it up further (besides the red-hot Baths) is Henry Laufer (a.k.a. Shlohmo), a 20-year-old lo-fi beat junkie and field-recording enthusiast, whose crackling, low-BPM compositions update Boards of Canada's filmstrip-soundtrack wooziness for the dubstep generation. An LA native, Laufer grew up listening to "stuff like DJ Shadow, Amon Tobin, M83...stuff with some sort of cinematic vision." He started making beats when he was 14, but "didn't really do it with any sort of purpose until I was like 17 or 18, though." That was also around the time he and his friends, already fans of Flying Lotus, discovered Low End Theory. Even before his first Low End visit, Laufer remembers reading up on the club and thinking, "Damn, this place sounds like the shit. I'ma be there every Wednesday for the rest of my life."

Laufer doesn't necessarily think of his music as beat-driven. "I'm really influenced by the ambient/noise stuff...I'm really influenced by sound in general. Corny as it may sound, I'm really intrigued by the debate of what is to be considered music." But he agrees with Baths' assessment of the beat scene as a place where he can give his exploration of such heady ideas free rein: "The beat scene is a lot about the acceptance of the weird shit."

Laufer relocated to San Francisco for college last year, but still spends summers in LA and stays connected with many of his fellow LA beat kids through the WeDidIt Collective, an online community of musicians and artists whose Blogspot-based website is as low-tech as the battered studio monitors he records on. "It's like blue-collar beats in this shit!" he jokes, when asked about some of the crappy gear he prefers.

As much attention as Shlohmo's debut album, *Shlomoshun Deluxe*, has received, Leeor Brown thinks Laufer is just getting warmed up. When Laufer recorded *Shlomoshun*, "he was only 19," Brown notes—then adds, only half-kidding, "Now he's 20, he's a whole 'nother trip." Brown has the young producer signed to a multi-record deal. "I really do think the kid hasn't even explored what he's capable of. He really

hasn't been doing it that long."

Shlohmo's next release, an EP called *Camping*, out this month, hints at what Brown is talking about. On new tracks like "Sippy Cup" and "Tomato Smash," Laufer is expanding his use of distorted vocal loops, weaving them like alien transmissions into his ambient soundscapes and beautifully broken beats. The Tobin and Shadow influences are still apparent, as are echoes of the beat scene's biggest field recording proponent, Leaving Records' Matthew David (see sidebar)—but more and more, Laufer sounds like a guy on his own trip.

From his perch in Colorado, away from the thriving but occasionally insular LA beat community, Alex Botwin (a.k.a. producer Alex B) sees combined beat/dubstep scenes springing up all over the country. "Beat music and dubstep are really pulling a lot of tickets," says the multi-tasking 25-year-old, who seems to know the headcount of every show he's ever played. "Everywhere I'm going, the places have been packed and sweaty—it's crazy."

In the past few years, Botwin has been building his Elm and Oak brand—a record label, design shop and clothing line all in one—into a sort of Brainfeeder for the burgeoning Colorado scene. He got his start playing bass and laptop in the Pnuma Trio, a road-warrior electro-jam band ("in 2002, we did 226 shows") signed to STS9's 1320 Records. But "once I heard FlyLo, it caught on real quick for me," Botwin says. His first gig at Low End Theory came when he was on tour with electro-funk producer Eliot Lipp's live act, Lipp Service. When Lipp Service booked a Low End show, Alex managed to score himself a slot as the opening act. Impressed with the young producer's style, Daddy Kev invited him back, and eventually agreed to master his debut album, *Moments*, and distribute it through Alpha Pup. "We just hit it off," Botwin says. "Everything was falling into place."

Rather than release *Moments* on Alpha Pup, Botwin says that both Kev and Flying Lotus recommended that he turn his design brand, Elm and Oak, into a record label. "Kev was like, 'Hey, here's an opportunity for us to help you do your own thing.'" So far, the label has only released Alex B's own blunted, electro-charged beats, but he has plans to expand his roster. "The music scene in Colorado is just poppin'... I wanna help promote a lot of the amazing artists I know from around here that aren't getting the love that they should."

Shlohmo, Baths, and Alex B may be the young beat producers currently making the most waves, but they're just the tip of the iceberg. Dig deeper, and you find guys like Mtendere "Tees" Mandowa, a 22-year-old painter



SHLOHMO

---

"CORN Y AS IT MAY SOUND, I'M REALLY INTRIGUED BY THE DEBATE OF WHAT IS TO BE CONSIDERED MUSIC." —SHLOHMO

Check out *XLR8R* podcasts from Shlohmo and Tees, and an episode of *XLR8R TV* with Alex B at [XLR8R.com/134extras](http://XLR8R.com/134extras).



TAKE

"I THINK THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT YOU GOTTA COME WITH YOUR OWN SHIT."  
- TAKE

and crafter of gorgeously melodic, meditative loops, whose debut album is due out on Brainfeeder later this year. Or Ryan "Asura" York, a former UCLA jazz major who brings a classically trained composer's ear to his brittle ambient beats. Or Juj, one of Shlohmo's WeDidIt cohorts, who injects his low-frequency wobblers with a little hip-hop swagger (and a dose of humor—one of his tracks is called "Pomegranate Limeade Just Spilled All Over My Laptop").

Then there's Dak (a.k.a. Dakim), a Detroit-bred, LA-based producer who remains unknown outside of beat circles but is universally admired by the true believers. Matthew David, who released Dak's debut album, *Standthis*, on his Leaving Records label last year, calls Dak's hallucinatory, deconstructed beats "some brand-new, groundbreaking shit," and nearly everyone we talked to agrees. "Dak makes just the most way-out shit," says Take, "and he's totally embraced by the beat community."

"That's one of the most beautiful things about it," Take continues, talking not just about Dak but about the LA beat scene as a whole. "We all come from really diverse musical backgrounds. I think we're all fascinated by sound and the love of music in general. I think that's why there's an openness to when someone shows up with a [sound] that's so out of the ordinary... We'll still embrace it because it's got this sort of

quality about it that is just raw and unique and from the heart."

Take, who's been releasing records for over a decade and remains, according to Brown, "the unsung hero the group," is also benefiting from the beat scene's increased profile. His latest album, *Only Mountain*, released on Alpha Pup in April, is already his most widely acclaimed work to date, and he's preparing to embark on his first full US tour. "I've toured Europe, like, four times," he says. "I think Europe was definitely first to embrace this sound. But in the last year, it's gotten so much more popular in the States—so yeah, it has made it a lot easier to set up shows."

When it comes to the beat community's cadre of younger producers, Take has mixed feelings. "The music has advanced so much, and it's crazy how much technology has changed our ability to make music so easily. That's inspired a whole generation of young kids to get a laptop, get Reason, and just get cooking. And some of them are making incredible stuff—and some of them are kind of just copying the sound."

Ultimately, he offers this advice to young beat producers: "I think the bottom line is that you gotta come with your own shit. Just push it forward." So far, the beat scene continues to embrace such innovation—and its best young talents continue to provide it. ■

## SIDE KICKS

Through its digital distribution arm, Daddy Kev's Alpha Pup Records has helped give rise to a small army of beat labels, the best of which are releasing the scene's most forward-thinking sounds. Here are three of the ones to watch.

### LEAVING RECORDS

Founded by dublab mainstay Matthew David and his girlfriend, artist Jesselisa Moretti, Leaving specializes in the outer fringes of beat abstraction, releasing true mind-blowers from the likes of Ras G, Dak, and David himself. In addition to digital distribution, Leaving also releases limited-edition physical product in a variety of unconventional formats—mostly cassette tapes, which David is obsessed with ("The whole tape thing is kind of a strange fetish of mine," he says.), but also things like hand-painted 5-and-1/4-inch floppy disks, which David used as sleeves for a limited run of CD-Rs. Moretti handles the design and visual elements, from packaging to videos; David provides the musical vision. "Nothing's really holding us back genre-wise," says David. "We're going to be doing some more pop stuff, too."

[leavingrecords.com](http://leavingrecords.com)

### FRIENDS OF FRIENDS

When publicist Leeor Brown decided to start his own label, he wanted each release to "frame a story for people to get a quick insight into the artist." Typical of the label's output is *Been Meaning to Tell You*, an album from San Antonio-based producer Ernest Gonzales that's available with remixes from the likes of Daedelus, Take, Yppah, and Matthew David, as well as an art book featuring visual interpretations of each of the record's 13 tracks. "The artist can invite whoever they want to be involved in the project," Brown explains. "That's something I'm really adamant about." FoF also gets creative with its packaging: *Been Meaning to Tell You* is available in no less than three formats (digital, white vinyl, art book) and the label's first two releases came with a T-shirt and a seed-paper download card. "Once you were done downloading, you could plant it in the ground and it would sprout."

[fofmusic.net](http://fofmusic.net)

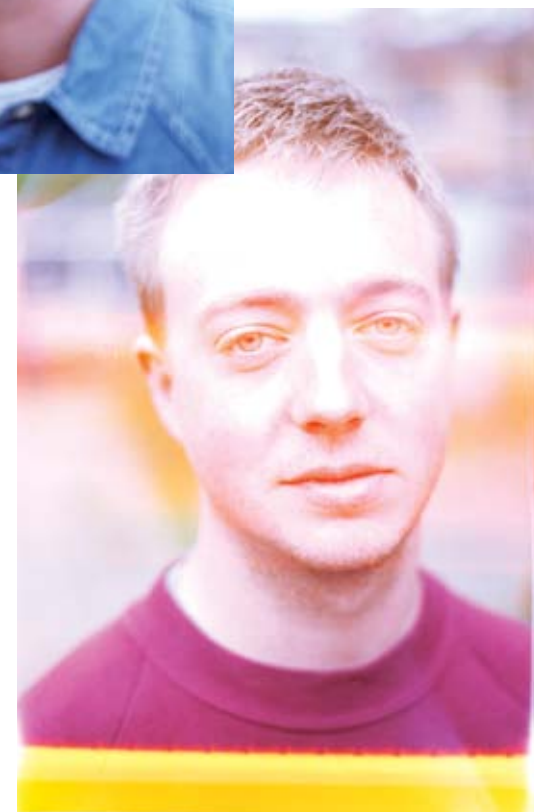
### NON PROJECTS

Started just last year by Brian Simon, who also records under the name Anenon, this relative newcomer is already making waves for its artists' *avant-garde* approach to beat music. "The way we see it, we want to be grounded in the LA beat scene, but let ourselves stretch away from that," explains Ryan "Asura" York, a college friend of Simon's whose debut album was Non Project's first release. Both Simon and York have studied jazz and classical composition—"at one point I thought I would be a classical composer," Simon says, "but I always wanted to make beats"—and are active members of the Glenalbyn House scene, where musicians perform works by Ravel and Debussy alongside original pieces by young composers like Asura and one of the label's newest signings, harpist Ana Caravelle. "It's really fun to be taking part in that beat world and doing stuff with a laptop," says York. "But that's not necessarily where I personally want to stay at."

[nonprojects.net](http://nonprojects.net)

# climb every mountain - tain

WORDS [ANDREW RYCE](#) PHOTOS [TYRONE LE BON](#)



WITH THEIR DEBUT LP SET FOR RELEASE, LONDON'S HIGHLY TOUTED MOUNT KIMBIE TAKES  
DUBSTEP OVER THE BRO-STEP HUMPH.



# THE MUSIC

of London-based duo Mount Kimbie, whose unique homespun style incorporates ambient, techno, dubstep, and found sounds, is so difficult to pin down, that when they sent out their first demo, "Paul [Rose, a.k.a. Scuba] was the only person who got back to us," Dom Maker, one half of the band, informs. But because of that sound, the band seems like a prime candidate to cross over from the dubsteppy associations of their label, the Scuba-run Hotflush Recordings, to broader, more accessible places.

Before they sent off that fateful demo, Maker and his studio partner Kai Campos were making music for years, together and separately. "We started chatting about tracks and music, and I found out Kai was producing music on his computer," says Maker, who met Campos at university in London. "When I heard what could be done with software musically, I just felt like I wanted to have a go myself."

Their debut EP, last year's *Maybes*, was the end result of the duo's correspondence with Paul Rose, and received massive attention in the dubstep world. However, Mount Kimbie's

sound is no paint-by-numbers dubstep affair; it's deceptively complex, with a sense of floating formlessness akin to the gentler side of '90s-era British IDM. But to call it formless would be to miss the point, as their bite-sized songs are painstakingly detailed—and their influences predictably varied: "I remember listening to Bass Clef, Burial, and Loefah a lot at the time, but we had both come from different musical backgrounds, and both loved material like Xiu Xiu and Steve Reich," offers Maker.

Those touchstones come through in their intriguingly microscopic music, where washes of sound are dotted with delicate beats. The anchor of the duo's aesthetic is ambiguous—many of the sounds vaguely resemble household noises or accidental bleed-through from other sources. To achieve that aesthetic, "We recorded two to three hours of natural sound, singing, guitar, and throwing stones against the walls in this 50-meter wind tunnel that leads onto the sea in my home village of Saltdean near Brighton," Maker explains. "I sampled five minutes of the recording and made two tracks out of it!" Of course, Kimbie's music

isn't all field recordings. "We use a lot of drum machines... the hip-hop drum pack on Fruity Loops is rinsed in nearly every track I have ever worked on in that program," Maker reveals.

Equally simplistic is their working method. "So far everything has been finished on Fruity Loops, with a couple of exceptions," Campos explains. You'd never be able to tell from the band's organic and diverse soundscapes, but their use of hardware is spare ("We don't use a lot of synths," says Campos). However, he does profess his love for loop pedals and the Korg Kaoss Pad, which they use extensively in their live show.

The *Maybes* EP showcased Mount Kimbie's almost rustic sound, with its majestic title track's gently descending riff lurching to life with a heaving-forward beat, and detached, pitched-up vocals sounding off in stirring fashion. It was followed up by the *Sketch On Glass* EP, which floated into funkier waters, employing a more colorful and playful palette of sounds. But July's *Crooks and Lovers*, the duo's debut LP, is a more realized statement of what Mount Kimbie is, in the holistic sense. Making the full-length "was



a completely different and very challenging process," says Maker. "The EPs came together very easily... I feel like I've learned a lot putting this one together." Campos is quick to chime in, though: "I kind of want to write another one straight away." While the record took somewhere in the neighborhood of a year, Maker says he'd like to take longer still on the next one. Adds Campos: "There were a couple of moments when I was feeling very intimidated by the process, where I had to come to certain realizations or places in my mind. I really didn't write a single thing for about six months, which was difficult but a really good thing to deal with and get over."

This time around they have a better grasp of what they're going for, and have packed even more into those tiny songs. *Crooks and Lovers* features their typical assortment of chopped vocals, miniscule bleeps, queasy circular rhythms, and heavily manipulated live instruments, but it oozes with a fluidity lacking in their early material. They exude a new confidence, as witnessed by the silky guitar riffs of "Before I Move Off" or the slick liquid funk of "Mayor," and tracks like "Carbonated" and "Ruby" sound comfortably lived-in; the band admits that in terms of recording, these songs were not approached much differently than their EP counterparts, so it's no shock that they sound

like an improvement rather than a reinvention.

They've also expanded their set of influences, loosening dubstep's grip and truly rising to the rare plateau of transcendence that has been ascribed to them since the beginning. "For me, going to Berlin was important—going out there and hearing and seeing this incredible techno sound," says Maker. "That trip made me respect and understand the hypnosis of just keeping a loop playing. That aspect has definitely rubbed off on this album."

The tempos are more varied than ever, as are the moods. "Blind Night Errand" dabbles in swollen acid sounds, while "Field" is like a strings-heavy Raster-Noton track, as electronics burst out into sunburnt guitar. "Field" was certainly a kind of distilled and exaggerated response to a lot of Basic Channel stuff I was listening to," says Maker. Serendipitously, "A lot of techno people have been really into our stuff," Campos points out, reflecting the duo's broad appeal.

However much techno they might be listening to these days, the band is still rooted in UK bass music. They have a growing partnership with rising fellow Londoner James Blake, whose dramatically swooning electronics and distinctively distorted vocals seem like a natural couple with Mount Kimbie's twisted chipmunk

voices. His influence is inescapable on *Crooks and Lovers* as vocals become more prominent ("Mayor" is a dead-ringer for Blake), which is appropriate as he's joined the band's live show as a sort of honorary third member. Campos happily agrees, calling James "a brilliant artist—someone who I can take ideas to and really engage with."

And in terms of engaging with others in the dubstep community, Mount Kimbie still has much reverence for the rapidly mutating genre. "This record wouldn't be here if it wasn't for dubstep," Campos says matter-of-factly. "I really don't mind whatever people want to call it. I feel grateful to be considered alongside some of the artists we get mentioned with. It seems like an incredibly interesting and fertile time for UK dance-influenced music at the moment." Ironically, Maker admits that their initial intention was to make straightforward dubstep—"but [we] couldn't really do it." Luckily, what they've created instead is so much more—and entirely their own. ■

*Crooks and Lovers* is out July 19 on Hotflush. [myspace.com/mountkimbie](http://myspace.com/mountkimbie)

# house party

# iii

WORDS THOMAS REES PHOTOS SHAWN BRACKBILL



TORONTO DUO AZARI & III AVOIDS PIGEONHOLING WHILE TAKING DISCO AND R&B ON THE RIDE OF THEIR LIFE.

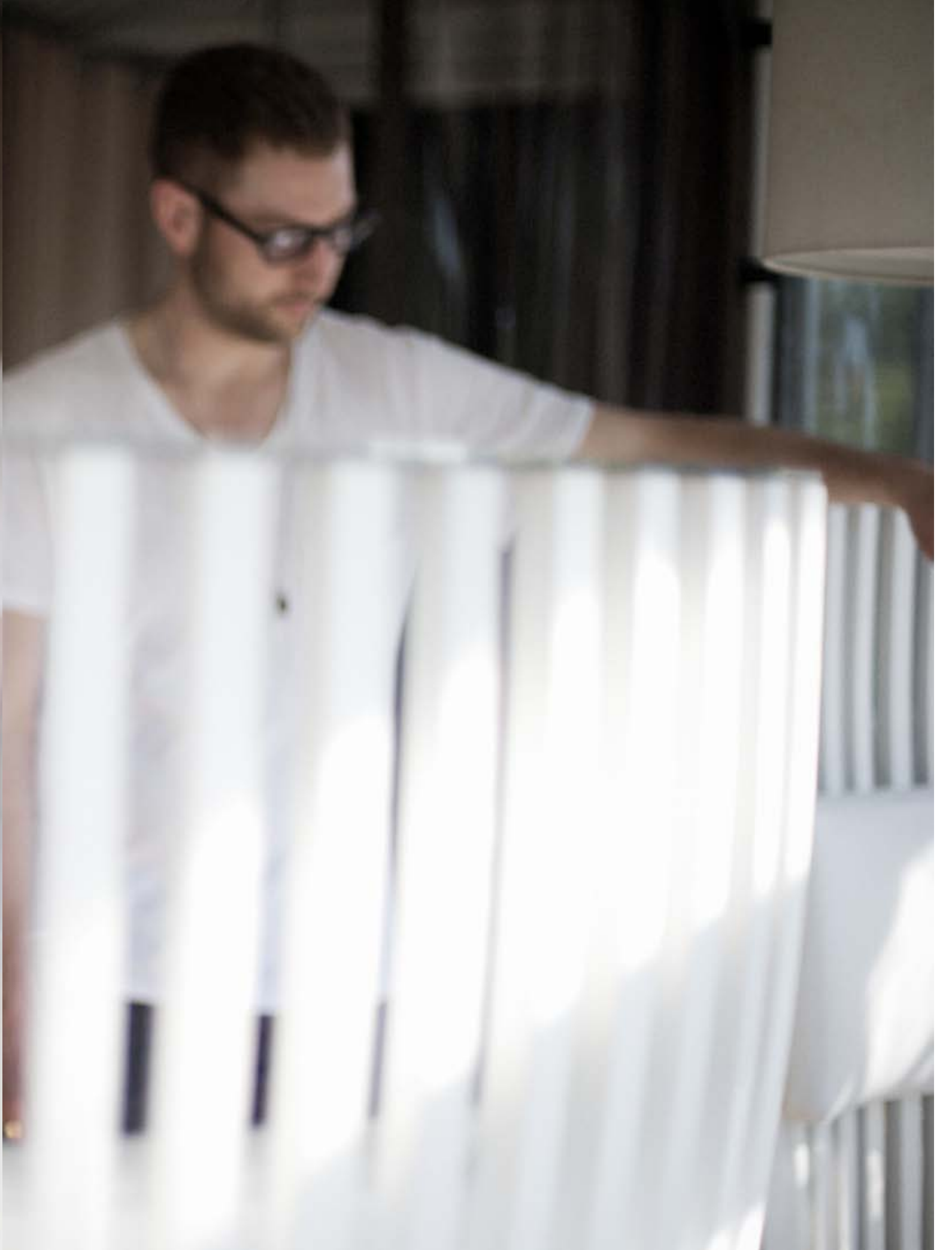


## ON THE

eve of a North American and European tour to include stops at Detroit's Movement festival, London's infamous Fabric club, Berlin's Panoramabar, and Toronto's Pride festival, Azari & Ill is ensconced in a remix for upcoming electro producer Sunday Girl in their Toronto studio. They're trying to work the piece into a harder, more four-to-the-floor banger. But making things into four-to-the-floor bangers is hardly their usual approach.

It's no secret that the electronic music world is constantly re-examining and reviving older genres. But given the breadth of sounds that have come out of the pair (whose name is pronounced "ah-ZAR-ee and third") since last year, it makes sense that they're actively trying to "not get pigeonholed" into a specific genre, as many fans and journalists are wont to do. Though early singles such as "Reckless (With Your Love)" and "She's an Illusion" make comparisons to '90s Chicago house and mid-'80s Italo inescapable, Christian Farley (a.k.a. "Dinamo Azari") and Alphonse Lanza (a.k.a. "Alixander III") don't see the need for such distinctions.

"There's so much to draw from, from so many [musical] situations," Lanza notes, that any sort of boxing-in can be viewed as an affront to good taste and, more importantly, musical freedom. "We're happy that Trax Records likes us," Farley adds with a laugh, "but we're not like, 'house house house house, house house house.' We're trying to not get over-housed here." Lanza adds that the group is trying to do "new, futuristic shit" with the analog orchestra housed in their studio, and that any similarities drawn between Azari & Ill's sound and those of the past are peripheral to how he and Farley compose. "The two of us have 35 years of DJing experience between us, and we have a lot of house and disco records, but sometimes we get compared to tracks that we haven't consciously thought of for 10 years or more," says Lanza.





These concerns will be illuminated on the group's upcoming debut long-player, which is comprised of 12 songs that run the gamut from techno to house to R&B. Perhaps the only constants are the duo's analog production aesthetic and partnership with vocalists Fritz Helder and Cedric Gasaida, who can both be heard on "Hungry for the Power," the group's breakout single on Cosmo Vitelli's I'm a Cliché imprint. And it's a happy accident that Gasaida seems to channel Jamie Principle, and Helder's voice resembles Robert Owens. "It's a blessing, really, that [the group sound has] come together," says Farley.

Alongside high-profile remixes for the likes of Booka Shade, HEALTH, Bot'ox, Munk, and Sid Who, the pair is constantly working with other musicians. "We can be a four-piece, or a two-piece, or an eight-piece," Lanza comments, reflecting a hands-on

flexibility and eclecticism that is mirrored by the group's productions. Even their DJ sets, revolving around four turntables, are consistent with what Farley calls an anything-goes, "rock 'n' roll attitude, keeping things moving and energetic." And they keep wildly busy outside of Azari & III: Farley is part of Una Aventura, a collaboration with Sal Principato of Liquid Liquid, and Lanza is currently doing production with Isis of Thunderheist and indie-electro trio Young Flux. Lanza enthuses that "a lot of indie-rock guys—like Grizzly Bear, for example—they're amazing songwriters and musicians. We just love listening to amazing songs, and that's what we're trying to do: create powerful, energetic music that moves beyond any sort of genre distinctions."

"Reckless (With Your Love)" is perhaps the most pertinent example of the universality that Azari & III are attempting

to achieve. Though the track could be placed alongside a Ralphie Rosario song in a DJ set, Cedric Gasaida's vocals allow listeners to approach the tune from any number of angles. Farley comments that the lyrical content "comes from any number of different factors. It isn't just coming from one direction."

"We've known people who have died of AIDS, and we know people whose relationships have ended because of infidelity," adds Lanza. "The amount of stuff we have to deal with in our society, it just piles up. We're reckless in our attitudes, from our consumption to our daily behaviors." Though Farley says that in the end, those who read the lyrics of "Reckless" as invoking the specter of AIDS are "not far off," the track speaks to any number of irresponsible behaviors that everyone witnesses on a daily basis. "In our era, a lot

of bombs are being dropped from left, right, and center," Farley continues.

The group dropped a real bomb with the Lanza-directed, YouTube-censored video for "Hungry for the Power," Azari & III's follow-up single to "Reckless." Featuring a Patrick Bateman-like businessman engaging in heinous acts of nihilistic cruelty, the video concludes with Lanza, Farley, Helder, and Gasaida attacking the suit, disemboweling him, and eating his innards. Sort of like a house group channeling the ultimate punk fantasy, "Hungry for the Power" is a haunting reminder that all actions have consequences, and that even those at 'the top' should be mindful of the privileges their status affords.

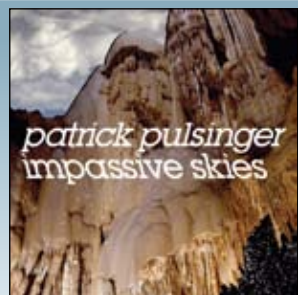
Addressing these very real issues head-on can be thought of as yet another example of how Azari & III is grounded, in direct contrast to so many other electronic producers who exist in an ethereal world

of techno-hedonism. From an insistence on using tangible, analog equipment in both studio and live settings to a songwriting and remixing aesthetic that eschews the contemporary penchant for creating ridiculous genre labels, the powerhouse production duo is well on its way to becoming one of the most acclaimed, sought-after teams on the electronic scene.

"To have our tracks compared to [Inner City's] 'Good Life' is absolutely incredible," says Lanza breathlessly, but he notes that he and Farley are "just good old Canadian boys, rolling with it and trying not to get big heads." With their humility working for them, Lanza and Farley are surely ready for the spotlights that they're about to step into.

"Reckless With Your Love" is out now on [Permanent Vacation](http://Permanent.Vacation.myspace.com/azariandiii). [myspace.com/azariandiii](http://myspace.com/azariandiii)

[Watch the video for "Hungry for the Power" at XLR8R.com/134extras.](http://XLR8R.com/134extras)



**PATRICK PULSINGER**  
*Impassive Skies* CD/2LP

Legendary Viennese producer **Patrick Pulsinger** draws the attention to the dancefloor on an album that reflects both the history of dance music and today's production techniques. *Impassive Skies* is an intense and visionary listening experience featuring an amazing diversity of guest appearances, including **Fennesz**, **Elektro Guzzi**, **SND**, and **Abe Duque**. "An album full of great moments." —Groove



**MICHAEL MAYER**  
*Immer 3* CD

*Immer* is the most respected mix series in electronic music, with Kompakt co-founder **Michael Mayer's** first volume voted the #1 "Best Mix CD of the 00s" by Resident Advisor. The third volume in the series bridges a timeless period of emerging music from producers known and new, featuring **Massive Attack**, **Gui Boratto**, **Charlotte Gainsbourg**, **DJ Koze** and more.



**DONNA REGINA** *The Decline Of Female Happiness* CD/LP

Cologne-based electronic duo **Donna Regina** keeps listeners in suspense with their beautifully melancholic avant-pop. Sonically varied and full of ideas, their sixth album for the **Karaoke Kalk** label sounds equally at ease and experienced, recalling everything from **Giorgio Moroder's** stunning productions, **múm's** ethereal soundscapes and **Stereolab's** playful detachment.



**TRENTMØLLER**  
*Into The Great Wide Yonder* CD/CD+DVD/2LP

**Trentemøller's** truly remarkable follow-up to *The Last Resort* offers as much depth and soul as its predecessor, yet sounds fresh and inspired, embracing haunting analog synths, distorted guitars and both real and electronic drums. Includes the hit single "Sycamore Feeling," featuring vocalist **Marie Fisker**.



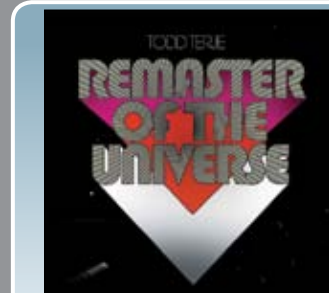
# ALBUM REVIEWS



## GUIDO

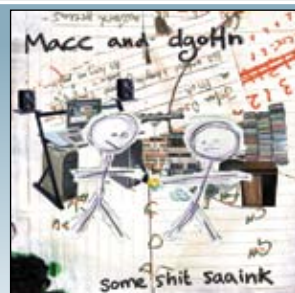
*Anidea*

Punch Drunk



**TODD TERJE**  
*Remaster Of The Universe* 2CD

**Todd Terje** compiles his finest work on this epic two disc compilation, featuring his best remixes, re-edits, exclusive re-mixes and more. Oslo's space disco fanatic makes his mark on everything from kitschy Euro sounds to dub disco and psychedelic house from **Antena**, **Lindstrøm**, **Shit Robot**, **Simon Baker**, **M**, and many more.



**MACC AND DGOHN**  
*Some Shit Saaink* CD

Tracks by veteran producers **Robert "Macc" Macciocchi** and **John "dgoHn" Cunnane** have been showing up on setlists from the likes of **Aphex Twin**, **Mary Anne Hobbs** and **Zane Lowe**. **Cult** label **Rephlex** presents a debut full-length that combines the jazz fusion and freedom of pioneers **Ltj Bukem** and **Squarepusher** with the slick modernity of 2010.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*I Love Funky* 2CD

**Rinôçérôse** drops a massive follow-up to the definitive *I Love Dubstep* compilation — a genre-defining double disc exploration of Funky, UK's freshest underground dance movement. Appearances by **Major Lazer**, **Kenny Dope**, **Roska**, **Geeneus**, **Missy Elliott** and many more highlight this 53-track collection, mixed by Funky experts **Supa D** and **MA1**.



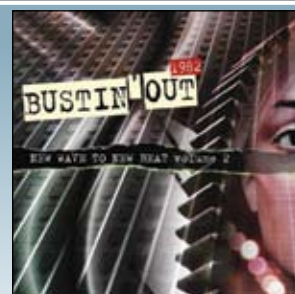
**NOTIC NASTIC**  
*It's Dark But It's Okay* CD

The debut album from **Notic Nastic** is an intense collection of pumping, popped-out, strangely addictive electronic bon-bons, where twisted vocals meet freaky beats. A mixture of musical elements reminiscent of **Missy Elliott**, **T.Raumschmiere** and the typical **Shitkatapult** out-of-nowhere style.



**GREIE GUT FRAKTION**  
*Baustelle* CD

**Antye Greie (AGF)** and **Gudrun Gut (Einstürzende Neubauten, Malaria!, Matador)** captured hours of construction site noise as the foundation for their new collaborative project on **Monika**. The result is a crossover of spoken word, raw beats and post-industrial-techno that draws you in its endlessness.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Bustin' Out 1982 - New Wave To New Beat Volume 2* CD

**DJ Mike Maguire (Juno Reactor)** charts the groundbreaking developments in electronic-based music through the '80s. Hugely-influential proto-industrial, dub-funk, and electro classics from **Gary Numan**, **Front 242**, **ESG**, **Afrika Bambaataa**, **Chris & Cosey**, **Mark Stewart**, **Dub Syndicate**, and more. Includes in-depth sleeve notes documenting each track.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *An Anthology Of Noise & Electronic Music Volume 6* 2CD

**Sub Rosa's** highly-acclaimed series continues with historical pieces, unknown gems and previously unreleased tracks in a masterfully curated collection including a booklet of notes and biographical info. More than 2 hours of music from the likes **Hijokaidan**, **Incapacitants**, **Stephen O'Malley**, **Henry Cowell**, **Z'ev**, **Daniel Menche** and more.



**SID LEROCK**  
*Tout Va Bien*

**Sid LeRock (aka Pan/Tone, Gringo Grinder)** presents his third album of fresh and bright tracks that never stop rocking, combining classical, melodic rock riffs and techno bass patterns. Previously, he's produced remixes for **Depeche Mode**, **Gui Boratto**, **Fairmont** and **Placebo**.



BRISTOL'S PURPLE PRINCE STRETCHES HIS LEGS ON HIS DEBUT FULL-LENGTH.

For all the talk in 2009 about Bristol's next generation of dubstep producers—largely centered around the hip-hop- and G-funk-influenced "Purple Trinity" of **Joker**, **Gemmy**, and **Guido**—it's almost shocking how quickly the bass music landscape has changed. While much of the UK scene seems to be gravitating toward house, **Joker's** 2010 output includes the "Tron" single and a reportedly scrapped album, and **Gemmy** seems to have disappeared, all of which leaves **Guido** and his *Anidea* album as the *de facto* torchbearers for Bristol's youth movement and the "purple" sound. That's a lot of pressure for a young producer, even one trained in classical and jazz piano like **Guido**, especially when full-length efforts aren't exactly dubstep's strong suit.

*Anidea* opens with the title track and a restrained tone. Where past **Guido** singles often relied on thick, layered production and blasts of lazer-like synths, "Anidea" is a pensive effort filled with white space and carefully placed notes. Piano and string sounds populate the song, but **Guido's** predilection for budget samples and synthesized instruments makes them sound anything but authentic. That's not a critique; *Anidea* is loaded with these kinds of cheap sounds, but **Guido** uses their inherent lack of musicality to create something special. It's very much rooted in the kind of composition one finds in videogames—**Guido** is an admitted gaming junkie—which lends his music an otherworldly, almost alien quality. This is particularly apparent on songs that utilize horn samples, another of his specialties. Album standout and anthem-in-the-making "Mad Sax" rides heavily on an absurd saxophone melody, to glorious effect. (The track's pitch-shifted vocal snippets

and dramatic synths also help.) "Cat in the Window" also contains a ridiculous horn crescendo, not to mention a trance-like chord progression that somehow comes across as fresh rather than cloying.

Yet for all its weirdness, *Anidea* remains an inherently listenable album, and one that should appeal to those outside of traditional dubstep circles. Between its half-time percussion, hip-hop feel, and chunky, warbling synths, the music sounds quite smooth, whether **Guido** is crafting an amped synth workout ("Woke Up Early," "Do It Right") or an introspective head-nodder ("Take Me Higher"). The effect is only heightened when **Guido** employs actual vocalists. "Beautiful Complication" isn't a new tune, but its lurching R&B remains on point. "Way U Make Me Feel" is another retreat, but **Guido** has updated the former b-side with a vocal from **Massive Attack** collaborator **Yolanda**, who puts an impressive '80s soul stamp on the song's bubbling synths and string flourishes. That said, the album does drag a bit as it comes to a close. The harder-edged "Tango" and album closer "Tantalized" may throw a bone to dubstep moshers looking to smash up the dancefloor, but their low-slung basslines and the latter's employment of wobble and heavy-metal guitars ultimately sound dated and out of place.

Still, *Anidea* remains an impressive debut and should be celebrated as a true coming-out party for **Guido**. The future of "purple" dubstep may be in question—only time will tell if that **Joker** album ever comes out and, more importantly, if it's any good—but **Guido's** high-concept use of lo-fi sounds bodes well for his future. *Shawn Reynaldo*

**HEALTH****DISCO2**

Lovepump United

When L.A.'s HEALTH emerged out the Smell scene with a noise pedigree and reams of grating guitar riffs, the band presented a confrontational front. But even at its most caustic and intense, the group showcased dance influences, melodies, and surging tribal rhythms. On *DISCO2*, a re-imagining of the bombastic *Get Color*, remixers focus on HEALTH's softer side, presenting a mellower counterpoint to the more uptempo, spiky, and electro-heavy surge of the band's first remix album, *DISCO*. Give much of the credit to Jacob Duzsik's malleable vocals, which are vague, breathy, and mysterious enough of a muse to bend to any dance beat, no matter how laid back. Much of the album is defined by the tension created by the swarming, flinty buzz of HEALTH's processed guitars, or, more importantly, the various remixers' removal of those sounds from the original songs. Once they are excised or downplayed, the tracks are practically a blank slate, which explains how "Before Tigers" can be stretched in three radically different directions: CFCF's breezy '80s synth workout, Gold Panda's tedious fiddling with effects, and Blindoldfreak's grandiose, rhythm-free coda. The best moments come when remixers go their own way. Javelin goes Rata-tat-lite on "In Heat" and Tobacco shoehorns Duzsik's vocals into another eerie, vintage synth demo. Overall, though, *DISCO2* deconstructs, and in some ways defangs, the music of HEALTH. Lacking the cohesion, perspective, and aggression that helped define *DISCO*, it doesn't quite transcend compilation status to become a complete statement on the band's original music. *Patrick Sisson*

**KODE 9****DJ-KICKS**

IK7

Kode 9's relationship with dubstep has always been an uneasy one, but with this latest *DJ-Kicks* installment, his avoidance of the genre is as much a political statement as it is an issue of taste. Only three tracks in the mix even somewhat resemble the one-drop cliché the genre has settled into: Ikonika's "Heston," Digital

Mystikz's "Mountain Dread March," and The Bug's "Run"—and even those seem like brilliantly fringe elements compared to the cartoonish wobble most often heard in the trenches.

People often throw around the term "bass music" to describe all the cross-sections between UK funky, bashment, grime, and whatever other London-centric styles are currently in play, and that seems like a decent starting place for where this mix ends up going. The first half in particular, which listlessly runs through the clattering bongos of Aardvark's "Revo," touches on some of Kode 9's own productions ("Blood Orange" sounds especially good in this mix), and then somewhat precariously ends with the rainy-day R&B of Rozzi Daime's "Dirty Illusions."

The second half is more predictable, and perhaps a better example of what bass music actually sounds like on the dancefloor. In particular, Addison Groove's "Footcrab" and Ramadanman's "Work Them" explore a sort of double-time torrent of kick drums and vocal samples that works especially well in juxtaposition to the seemingly slower stuff. Finally, The Bug and Flowdan's murdered-out "Run" closes out the mix; it's total anthem material and case in point as to why dubstep's best moments have never really been "dubstep" to begin with. *Brandon Ivers*

**ORIORL****NIGHT AND DAY**

Planet Mu

There's a special rush one gets driving down the freeway *en route* to a club or concert on a Saturday night. White and red brake lights blink and glow in traffic, wind rushes by, and fluorescently lit buildings create a halo above the city. You arrive at the spot energized and ready to plunge into music. Oriol Singhji's debut for Planet Mu, *Night and Day*, takes you on that journey from twilight through sunrise on an album well suited for automobile excursions. The Barcelona-born, London-based artist places analog and digital keyboards front and center in his music, and uses them with both restraint and freedom. Singhji's balance of melodic chords and astute improvisation is crucial to *Night and Day*'s success.

The cool arpeggios on opener "Flux" are anchored by mid-tempo, funky machine rhythms that recall Kirk Degiorgio's 1997 masterpiece, *Planetary Folklore*. In fact, the post-trip-hop and pre-broken-beat era from 1996-1999 is a good reference point for this album. During that time British and European artists like Degiorgio, Ian O'Brien, and Gerd were exploring electro-jazz fusion territory while Claude Young, Kenny Larkin, and Anthony "Shake" Shakir were merging Detroit's melodic techno with soulful elements. You hear echoes on Singhji's "Memories" and "Jam," which feature superb pitch-wheel lead key solos. "Coconut Coast" and "5 Bars" nod respectfully to '80s electro-soul outfits Kleer or Con-Funk-Shun, but share more in common with contemporary synth stylers Dam-Funk and FaltyDL. The 11 tracks on *Night and Day* are all excellently arranged and consistently pleasing. It's 24 hours you won't soon forget. *Tomas Palermo*

**OST & KJEX****CAJUN LUNCH**

Dynammic

Obsessed with the cheese on their plates and the cheese on their turntables, Petter Haavik and Tore Gjedrem (plus recurrent guest vocalist Tracee Meyn) forego the usual expectations of cool to create joyful music that is both frequently ridiculous and frequently ridiculously good. The

oddball Norwegian production duo has claimed that their debut, *Some But Not All Cheese Comes From the Moon*, was, implausibly, based on a Matthew Herbert-style appropriation of cheese and biscuits (as the band name translates) as its sound source. The *fromage* fascination continues on their debut for the Hamburg-based Dynammic imprint—"The Yellow Man" appears to consider the place of their favorite food product in a relationship, while the guitar-deploying "Bluecheeseblues" warrants parts one and two. Yet somehow, the occasional Solomun and Jamie Jones collaborators manage to avoid the ghostliness often associated with forced wackiness. Rather, the (really rather fun) mucking about is cut through with loss and loneliness: "I feel I have to tell it's over," regrets "Mosambiqueutravelplan"; the cast of "Continental Lover" are all "by themselves," even the gigolo who spends his summer in Monaco; the finest track, "Bluebird," ponders simply, "You know those times you feel alone?"; even "Bluecheeseblues" is more somber than silly, with regret flowing through its (blue) veins. Like their French equivalent, Nöze, Ost and Kjex disarm with a manic grin, a stupid lyric, and a ludicrous vocal, but really *Cajun Lunch* is a fine, fine feast of wonky, off-kilter house that makes you hanker to be invited to their party. Glorious stuff. *David Hemingway*

**SO PERCUSSION & MATMOS****TREASURE STATE**

Cantaloupe

It's safe to assume that at this point in Martin Schmidt's and Drew Daniel's storied and long-stretching audio career, there isn't a physical object that the duo hasn't at least *considered* utilizing for sound recording and subsequent application in an adventurous composition. As Matmos, Schmidt and Daniel have made music using the sounds of a cow uterus, snails, LASIK surgery tools, a rat cage, burning flesh, and liposuction, not to mention a litany of other unconventional items and, on occasion, actual musical instruments. *Treasure State*, Matmos' new collaborative record with Brooklyn-based experimental orchestra So Percussion, extends the duo's list, albeit in a relatively unfocused manner.

The loosely composed songs on *Treasure State* are each based around one theme: "Water" uses water sounds, "Aluminum" utilizes beer cans, "Needles" harnesses the sound of a cactus, and so forth. Surrounding Matmos' manipulated samples, So Percussion performs the more melodic elements of each piece. Sometimes the disparate layers intertwine and play off one another ("Cross" is a strange bunch of noise that manages to groove into a dance beat), while other songs let the instruments and field recordings play out seemingly unaware of each other ("Swamp" is as murky and chaotic sounding as its title implies).



and song-based format—brought forth by more instrumentation (guitars, assorted strings, horns, synths, etc.) and vocal work than The Books have ever used.

As the album closes with a slow pulse of unnameable drones, a woman says, "You're becoming the world, and everyone in it." The dislocated sample prompts a sensation that *The Way Out* has brought you closer to humankind. In a way, it does. The Books have combined unobtrusively strong melodies and sparse drum rhythms with their unending collection of humanity's sonic hodgepodge. It's an undefinable musical culmination of our collective conscious—reminding us that the more we've changed, the more we've stayed the same. *Patric Fallon*

**WOLFGANG VOIGT****FREILAND KLAVIERMUSIK**

Profan

During the years when minimal techno was king, much was made of the genre's similarities to *avant garde* and minimalist classical movements from the previous century, but often, specific affinities between the musics were referred to in hazy terms. Yet as co-founder of Kompakt and one of the indubitable kings of the minimal genre, Wolfgang Voigt is well suited to begin the discussion of these sonic similarities, which he does quite breathtakingly on *Freiland Klaviermusik*. The 13-track album contains mostly synthetic piano sounds and percussion, and plays unlike any techno record released in recent memory—a track like "Schweres Wasser" shares more with experimental composer Conlon Nancarrow than Ricardo Villalobos, and album opener "Alleingang" takes cues from the brooding, discordant tone clusters of Henry Cowell's *Dynamic Motion*, a piece composed in 1916. While one is hard-pressed to imagine such pieces playing well to dancefloor crowds—tracks from the album's 2008 preview single have cleared floors in Europe—their harmonic complexities and deep throbs make for hypnotic listening, and keep the discerning ear coming back. Perhaps the most rewarding tracks on *Freiland*, though, are those that eschew synthetic pulses entirely and allow Voigt to address such varied precedents as Erik Satie's *Vexations*, as on "Dunkler Weg," or even the "Emerson" section of Charles Ives' *Concord Sonata*, as on album closer "Silberg." While the party circuit might not appreciate such compositional gems, there are innumerable music fiends and classical composers who are certain to find Voigt's latest outing to be a truly exciting aural experience. *Thomas Rees*

What's always made Matmos' albums most interesting was a dedication to concept and theme, whether it be medical procedures, Americana, or iconic figures. *Treasure State* is void of any such idea, and lowers the album from 'elevated thought and experimentation put to musical document' down to 'interestingly unusual *musique concrète*.' *Patric Fallon*

**THE BOOKS****THE WAY OUT**

Temporary Residence

At the beginning of *The Way Out*, the fourth album by found-sound-obsessed duo The Books, a man says, "Welcome to a new beginning." It sets the tone for one of music's most indescribable acts to reinvent itself—a strange task for a group whose work is sometimes called "a genre of one." And yet that is what's kept The Books' music beyond comparison for over eight years; the more they change, the more they stay the same.

For certain, *The Way Out* sounds like The Books. Nick Zammuto's hushed vocals still make their way through guitar and cello tones, broken sample-based rhythms, and loads of found cassette and vinyl recordings. The formula works particularly well on the vocal-heavy "Beautiful People," the straightforward folk of "Free Translator," and soulful, string-based standout "All You Need is a Wall." It's the increasing sense of musicality that sets *The Way Out* apart from the band's past efforts. The album boasts a solid melodic presence

## BUBBLIN'



## GIRL UNIT



London, UK

Although he was born and bred in the UK, 24-year-old Philip Gamble's musical passions originate on the American side of the Atlantic. Miami bass, electro, ghettech, Chicago house, and especially US hip-hop and R&B are all influences, which he then distills into an abstract, 808-driven house template. Gamble began releasing mixes under the name Girl U No Its True in 2006, but only recently started dropping remixes and original productions under the shortened Girl Unit moniker. His *I.R.L.* EP on Night Slugs has been a staple release for the post-funky set, remixes for C.R.S.T. and Pirate Soundsystem are on the way, and his jaw-dropping and as-yet-unreleased song "Wut" is poised to be a game-changer when it surfaces later this year.

myspace.com/girl\_unit

## GUEST REVIEWS: SURGEON



UK producer/DJ Anthony Child (a.k.a. Surgeon) has been sending heads rolling since his 1995 debut, crafting innumerable slices of hard, experimental techno ranging from early industrial to Harry Partch, Child has released records on Tresor, Downwards, and his own Counterbalance label, and was once part of the infamous hard techno outfit British Murder Boys with Karl O'Konnor. A remixing guru whose takes on Mogwai, Heiko Laux, and many others have made him a legend, Surgeon is finally taking part in Fabric's venerable mix series with the release of *Fabric 53*. Here, he gives us his four favorite techno records of the moment, with a bent towards the harder edges of the genre. [dj-surgeon.com](http://dj-surgeon.com)

## DEATH ABYSS

## THE HERMETIC ANTAGONIST

Rodz-Konez

Don't let the Norwegian Black Metal name put you off—this is some seriously deep music. Heavy and deep; full of pagan architecture, clues to follow on your journey into the depths. "Mix One" is a dark ride. Marked by waves of building intensity, thankfully the rhythm is skippy enough to avoid the dreaded plod! "Mix Two" ups the pressure with some great dubstep rhythms, though you'll find these are more like Scorn than Burial. "Mix Three" again effectively maps the techno/industrial/dubstep hybrid.

## SKINNERBOX

## SAM &amp; EARL EP

Doxa

I don't know much about Skinnerbox other than that one of them looks a bit like like David Cross. "Sam" is a wonderfully wonky disco jam with a Moog synth line on top, which takes you by the hand and leads you into a den of iniquity. Lots of different quirky drops into the unexpected. ("*Sex Dwarf/Isn't it nice/Leading disco dollies to a life of vice.*") "Earl" is also quite odd, though nowhere near as kinky as "Sam." Maybe that would be too much fun for one day.

## DATAMINE

## STAGE 3 - VERIFICATION

Rodz-Konez

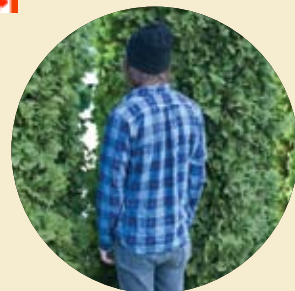
Heavy start with "Interpolate": bell tones in 3/4 time over a steamroller rhythm; suffocating. "True Paths" is my pick here; it sounds so sick when I've played it out. With a super-spastic swung rhythm and jerky bleeps, I can imagine Ian Curtis doing his special dance to this one! "Checksum" has similar bell tones to "Interpolate," but is a much deeper track with additional abstract elements.

## SP-X

## SIGNAL PATH EXPERIMENTS EP

Komisch

The heavier end of modern minimal techno. This has enough bite to really work without sounding flaccid like so many other releases of its kind. Three long, stripped-down tracks; the third, excitingly titled "SP14," is my favourite here. I like its groove best; it sounded really mean when I played it out. A little like one of the Equalised releases, but dirtier.



## TEEN DAZE

Vancouver, Canada

Operating in a cloud of mystery, young Canadian producer Teen Daze has made a name for himself simply by opening a tumblr account and posting some tunes online. He's yet to play any live shows, release anything officially, or even publicly disclose his name, but Teen Daze's waxy bedroom synth exercises have already been both widely praised and shoehorned into the chillwave genre. Yet that ignores the music's melancholy pop vibe, something that wouldn't be out of place on an '80s John Hughes movie soundtrack. His debut EP, *Four More Years*, comes out this summer on Arcade Sound Ltd.

teendaze.tumblr.com



## SUPRA1

Krakow, Poland

Remix contests often seem like cheap promotional gimmicks, but every once in awhile, they do unearth something special. Tomek Urbanowicz and Thomas Wirski came together in late 2008 when NY's Trouble & Bass held a Little Jinder remix contest, and the pair's epic, wobbling rework of "Polyhedron" became an unexpected dancefloor monster. A number of remixes have followed (more are on the way), but now Supra1 has unveiled its first official release, the *Still Believe* EP on Trouble & Bass, which contains not only a ridiculous remix package from heavyweights like Brackles, L-Vis 1990, and Gucci Vump, but another surprise smash in the form of b-side "Ghoster."

myspace.com/thisissupra1

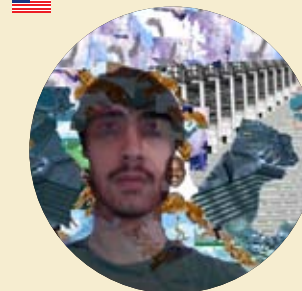


## THE BLESSINGS

Glasgow, Scotland

While Mike Slott and Hudson Mohawke are the biggest names to come out of Glasgow's LuckyMe collective, Dominic Flannigan (a.k.a. Dom Sum) and Martyn Flynn (a.k.a. Fine Art) are the guys who quietly built the label behind the scenes, putting their own music-making on the back burner. That's about to change: Operating as The Blessings, the genre-busting duo recently released the *Galaxy High* EP on the similarly open-minded Nod Navigators imprint. Combining low-end blap and R&B bounce with spacey futurism, and touching on a number of points in between, The Blessings won't be known as "the other guys from LuckyMe" for long.

myspace.com/the\_blessings



## LOL BOYS

Los Angeles, CA/Montreal, Canada

In 2010, the notion that the internet brings people together is already cliché, but in some cases it really rings true. Producers Markus Garcia and Jerome Potter actually met on a message board, bonded over their shared tastes in music, and began working on tracks together. Based on the slew of re-edits, remixes, and original tunes the pair has unleashed in recent months, it appears that those tastes include shuffling tropical percussion, pitch-shifted vocal samples, warped R&B sounds, and upbeat dancefloor rhythms. Their debut EP is coming on Palms Out Sounds in early August, and will be followed by another release on Discobelle shortly thereafter.

hot-tropic.com

**MUSIC IS THE DRUG** Dealing the purest quality electronic dope to DJs & music addicts

**ADDICTECH.COM**

Exclusive Live Mix

OPIUO SLURP & GIGGLE ADDICTECH RECORDS

BLUETECH LOVE SONGS TO THE SOURCE INTERCHILL RECORDINGS

AUDIOVOID THIRD RAIL EP ADDICTECH RECORDS

BAD VOLUME 03

VARIOUS ARTISTS BAY AREA DUBSTEP 03 FULL MELT RECORDINGS

MP3, FLAC, WAV - EXCLUSIVE RELEASES - CHARTS - ARTIST/LABEL MINISITES





## IN THE STUDIO: OVAL

WITH TWO NEW RECORDS, THE GERMAN GLITCH-TECHNO GOD TAKES IT WAAAAAY BACK TO BASICS.

Fifteen years ago, Germany's Oval caught our ears by physically damaging CDs and mining alien beauty from their skips and loops. Their classic albums, *Systemisch* and *94 Diskont*, wrote the book on what would become "glitch" techno. The group later shrank to just frontman Markus Popp, who went on to create sublime psych-noise albums and design audio software for his *Ovalprocess* sound-art installation. All of which makes the production for the double-album *O* and the EP *Oh*, his first two records in nearly a decade, quite startling. The frontiersman of yore went low-tech by choosing cheap, off-the-shelf software and an old PC. Popp also performs with "real" instruments (as in electric guitars and drums), but his matter of piecing their sounds into contorted fragments is unmistakably "Oval." *XLR8R* thought he had some explaining to do.

**XLR8R: What drove you to produce the two new records using cheap software and a five-year-old PC? Was it a matter of defiance against the norm for many artists who always choose high-end software and gear?**

Markus Popp: That's merely the setup I ended up with. Plus, I never quite came to terms with [Mac] OSX. But there is definitely no programmatic statement behind these two unrelated facts.

**What was your basic studio equipment setup for *Oh* and *O*? Were there any major challenges?**

My studio setup was a PC (WinXP), Ableton Live, consumer-level audio interface, several instruments (real and virtual), some plug-ins (all commercial, none custom), and a wide range of real-time controllers (drum triggers, faderboxes, keyboards). In retrospect, my old approach looks like an almost irresponsible waste of time. I spent outrageous amounts of time to reconstruct my music from almost arbitrary fragments of music—which were not at all easy to come by, by the way. At that time, it was important for me to achieve my musical results exactly in this way—programmatically and practically—because I wanted to prove *this* could still be "music"—and I guess most listeners were with me at the time. So, mission accomplished? Sure, but how about skipping all this crazy overhead and start with music in the first place? In practical terms, however, this turned out to be much easier said than done. "Why not just start with music?" pretty quickly turned out to be a long journey. Learning a "musical" skill set suddenly teleported me into a huge universe full of new responsibilities... with an uncertain outcome. Who knows, I might simply turn out to be bad at writing songs. Still, I was absolutely determined to make it happen, because "music" as a backdrop has so much more room for future expansion than the often only theoretical "creative headroom" of music technology. From

here on out, I am very much looking forward to evolving my music like a band would. Funny... these days, there are definitely moments when I think that music is all about the software you don't use. And that harmony and melody are more effective weapons than any disruption of sound.

**What was the basic recording and mixing process for your new records?**

I'll get this out of the way first: I don't do any mixing. At least not in the sense of "from rough mix to final mix" or "auditioning and comparing different mixes." I merely arrange the song parts on the timeline after balancing volume, structure, and frequencies in the session view. And since almost all my songs have a fixed number of elements, things never get too complex. This way, it's clearly apparent which track still needs exactly one or the best part in the "bass" column, instead of getting carried away with blindly recording 20 bass parts which then never stand a chance of actually making it into the track. The actual recording process was pretty standard—for a "real" musician, I guess. No more "I'll start with this for now, I can always create iterations of it later," but instead, it was all about recording many takes, muscle memory, and naming the best recordings—the latter sometimes being the hardest part. And while the old Oval stuff was composed out of tiny fragments like stop-motion animation, the recordings on *Oh* are live improvisations, sometimes several minutes long.

**Are there plans to continue working with the *O* and *Oh* setup, or are there other studio processes or gear that you're experimenting with?**

Both records add up to a debut album of sorts. And, like the first film of someone who never actually owned a camera but spent years envisioning his first film before shooting it, [*O* and *Oh*] carry forward a strong, confident narrative and are chockfull of ideas. But of course some things are still missing, while others were probably a bit overdone.

Oval's *Oh* EP is out now in a limited vinyl edition, and *O* will be released in September, both on Thrill Jockey. [myspace.com/markuspopp](http://myspace.com/markuspopp).

## ARTIST TIPS: DISKJOKKE

Oslo-based space-disco producer Joachim Dyrdaahl has made a name for himself as Diskjokke with releases on Prins Thomas' Full Pupp label as well as Get Physical sub-label Kindish. A classically trained violinist and math whiz, Dyrdaahl's approach to beat-making is best described as holistic, incorporating influences that range from country music to early Italo. Dyrdaahl's second full-length on Smalltown Supersound, *En Fin Tid*, shows off his dynamism, with ambient moments and white noise as present as the slick disco bass and synth arpeggiations his sound is known for. Below, Dyrdaahl gives us a few tips on how to achieve the best reverb and delay, two sonic effects that are indispensable to his cosmic productions. *Thomas Rees*

### Record and bounce processed sounds with reverb

Set up the sound you want to use—let's say a cymbal hit—in a separate track. Add a fantastic reverb to this track, and bounce it as a solo sound with a long reverb time and the dry/wet ratio of your choice. Then import the bounced sound into your project and use it as you wish. Reverse it, chop it, and pitch-shift the parts differently. Use just the reverb and not the signal itself (works better with sounds that have no tail in itself, like a reversed snare or tom), add effects to it, or use it as a substitute for the original track and save tons of CPU capacity.

### Play with your dry/wet ratio

Say you want to add a percussion loop to a track, but it stands out too much or does not sound quite the same as the rest, and you've given up on EQing it to fit. Slowly fade the loop in all wet so that all you really hear is some sort of rumble, similar to a party next door. Then when this sound is loud enough to get attention, you completely remove the reverb on the first beat of the bar and the party has moved into your room. Another good way to bring out elements of the

track is to slowly (say, over 16 bars) go from dry to wet and then cut or fade the signal.

### Alter volume and panning

This tip is based on having really, really long delay time on a single sound (like a single conga hit). You could also use a more complex signal, but that quickly gets messy. In Cubase, you open the automation track below the actual track and start fiddling. You can play the signal in itself with volume low and then increase the volume of the track as the tune plays along. This enables you to let the sound of the delay go on forever with even a cheap delay device. Then duplicate the track, move the signal in the new track a bit, pan the original track to the left and the new track to the right. By automating the volume up and down, these two delays (or more, if you like) will work together and create a cool effect.

### Change your feedback and delay time

By automating/altering these two parameters in your delay box at the same time, you will make the original signal come alive in a very distinct way. I prefer to use this effect on synth lead

sounds and vocals, like in my remix of Ost & Kjex's "Boston Food Strangler," which then gets more character. Try turning feedback to the max while decreasing the delay time or the opposite. You should consider adding a compressor to the track, as the result could be surprisingly loud and weird here.

### Add real reverb

If you have access to a place with good natural reverb, you should bring your gear there, record whatever needs reverb, and put that into your production to add uniqueness. In the stairs that lead to my studio we have fantastic "hall" reverb, so I use that space to record percussion, like claps, shaker, and tambourine. I first record the dry sound in my studio, then I go out into the stairs where I put one microphone near the source and one further up the stairs. Here I record on two tracks, and this gives me the opportunity to mix the three recorded sounds in the project in the same way that you use the dry/wet knob on your studio reverb. This method can be expanded with more microphones, and the recordings will make a great foundation for using all the techniques and tips above.

[Listen to Diskjokke's Ultimate Beach Mix at XLR8R.com/134extras.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=134extras)



Check out the AX-Synth at [www.RolandUS.com/AX-Synth](http://www.RolandUS.com/AX-Synth).

## KANE & LYNCH: DOG DAYS

(EIDOS; PS3, X360)



On the eve of a big score, *Kane & Lynch: Dog Days* sees you playing the part of Lynch, a crazy-pants ex-con doing a little freelance network for a powerful Shanghai crime syndicate, who once again teams up with Kane, a fellow murderous convict who just also happens to be the only other person you can trust. However, when things don't go quite according to plan, the game quickly becomes rife with car chases, close-quarter shoot-outs and pants-wettingly tense situations that are only compounded by the tawdry neon glow of Shanghai's tightly packed streets. While the original's third-person action focused on Kane, whose military training made for a more buttoned-up combat experience, Lynch's anything-goes style leads to a few more improvisations in gameplay, such as using enemies as human shield and shooting at gas cans to give large groups of baddies an unwanted tan. *Dog Days* also includes a multiplayer online co-op and an excellent new arcade mode that gives you four minutes to steal four million dollars along with a team of seven AI companions, all of whom will try to kill you if you don't pull your weight in the heist. There is no "I" in "cold-blooded." With a distinct visual style that often dips into a shaky-cam, YouTube feel à la *Cloverfield* and two of the nastiest anti-heroes you could ever hope to never cross paths with in real-life, *Dog Days* should satiate just about anyone's inner sociopath quite nicely. *Ryan Rayhill*

## Harman AKG K 390 NC Headphones

MSRP: \$199; akg.com



If you're in the market for some professional-grade earphones with plenty of next-level bells and whistles, AKG has got your number—K 390 NC, to be exact. These earbuds flex the kind of pristine sound true audiophiles would swear by thanks to flight adapter and active noise reduction features, but are also built for the average listener looking for a set of headphones that fit comfortably and control whatever iToys you've got at hand. It's said AKG's K 390 NCs were made specifically to play loud and proud for the whole of their lengthy lifespan. Plus, these bad boys are black, and black goes with everything. *Patric Fallon*

## Native Instruments Paranormal Spectrums & Deep Freq

MSRP: \$79 (each); native-instruments.com



Two new Kore 2/Kore 2 Player instruments have officially dropped, each with its own unique premise. The first, Paranormal Spectrums, is designed to create dark, ominous sound aesthetics. It's comprised of 100 sounds with eight distinct variations for each, meaning you've got 800 instantly usable starting points for getting your otherworldly freaky-deaky on. Deep Freq, alternatively, is the latest brainchild of sound designer Denis Gökdag, and was built as a frequency manipulator effect unit. By using combinations of filters, resonators, frequency shifting, re-synthesis, and more, it's meant to help you alter and reshape the tonality of your beats, vocals, or any other audio. *Evan Shamoon*

## WAVES AUDIO CHRIS LORD-ALGE ARTIST SIGNATURE COLLECTION PLUG-INS

MSRP: \$830 (FREE TO MERCURY BUNDLE OWNERS); WAVES.COM



There are producers aplenty that would argue one-click mixing is damaging, but there's a niche without multimillion-dollar studio access that can appreciate chained audio processing plug-ins. Waves' Chris Lord-Alge Artists Signature Collection (henceforth referred to as CLA Sigs) offers some effortless impact to those who don't want to carve individual frequencies. And yet, these aren't casual tools.

As an engineer, Chris Lord-Alge has manned the desk for marquee modern-rock radio artists, and these plug-ins exude airplay ambition. The CLA Sigs put a chassis atop modeled versions of Lord-Alge's favorite compressors, channel-strip EQs, reverbs, delays, pitchbenders, doublers, etc. to give tracks punch. Each of the six application-specific CLA Sigs (Bass, Drums, Vocals, Guitars, Unplugged, and Effects) is interfaced in a mini-mixing board GUI with eight sliders and six buttons, so there's more than just hitting Insert. Project studios, however, can have modest processing power, so testing was in Logic Pro 9 on a 2.4 GHz Core 2 Duo

MacBook Pro with 6 GB RAM. As expected, these plug-ins are resources-hungry, so don't anticipate running more than a few instances on a slimline rig (this may require, say, affecting bussed drums instead of separate kit pieces), but the end results aren't limited.

Applied to stems recorded by Gigantor of Evol Intent/Computer Club, the CLA Sigs could both open up and subvert. Each plug-in's components has three cheekily named presets to cycle boosts, cuts, widening, gating, re-amping, flanges, etc. It's intuitive, but also easily abusable, making things bright, yet with sub-bass-eclipsed mids if not properly calibrated. Used conscientiously, however, these plug-ins compellingly sit vocals, accent drums (or creatively distort them), and push stringed instrument presence.

Sure, you can shape more idiosyncratic transients, apply custom impulses, etc, but if you're blending live band elements and time is money, these EQ curves are cash well spent. *Tony Ware*

## Crackdown 2

(Microsoft, X360)

Allowing you to basically play as Superman without the tacky outfit and annoying sense of decency, *Crackdown 2* puts you in the role of a morally ambiguous lawman who also happens to be imbued with freaky genetic super-abilities. *Crackdown 2*'s open-world, do-anything style of play easily draws comparisons to *Grand Theft Auto*, and rightly so, as its original developer also made *GTA*. However, while *GTA* keeps it somewhat realistic, *Crackdown 2*'s cyberpunk bent allows for a much wilder ride as you are eventually able to jump hundreds of yards in a single leap while hoisting a truck on your shoulders, which itself can be launched into a crowd of rabble-rousing mutants bent on ruling your futuristic burg of Pacific City. And if your truck missile happens to miss its target, your sniper rifle, machine gun, or grenade launcher are sure to produce the desired results. Tons of weapons, vehicles, mini-games, and online co-operative play make *Crackdown 2* a must-have for any action fan. *Ryan Rayhill*



## Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light

(Eidos; PS3, X360)

With a severe departure from the usual *Tomb Raider* formula, the buxom adventuress' latest download-only title, *Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light*, may have just saved the series' spotty legacy. With both a crisp visual style and gameplay reminiscent of PC favorite *Diablo* (or, for those old-schoolers out there, *Guantlet*), *Guardian of Light* places Lara in the catacombs of a South American temple while she hunts for a legendary artifact known as the Mirror of Smoke, which is protected by local badass Totec, the titular Guardian of Light. However, after Lara and poor Totec both get hornsogged by another villainous treasure hunter, you are forced to team up and hunt him down. Relying heavily on co-op gameplay, both Lara and Totec have unique abilities that each other relies on to solve puzzles, take out enemies, and progress. *Ryan Rayhill*

## METROID: OTHER M

(NINTENDO; WII)



With a near 25-year history, to say that the *Metroid* series (alongside its space-pirate-hunting protagonist, Samus Aran) has a loyal following would be an understatement. While never quite achieving *Mario*-levels of mainstream super-stardom, *Metroid* has always delivered the goods in terms of engaging action, brain-wracking exploration, and sci-fi ambiance, repeatedly earning it legions of fans the world over with each new title. Which is exactly why there was some cause for concern when news broke that Team Ninja, the developer behind the totally unrelated hack-and-slash gorefest that is the *Ninja Gaiden* series, would be helming *Metroid: Other M*, the latest game in the *Metroid* canon. While the initial worry was certainly understandable, *Other M* neither needs nor deserves your fanboy stink-eye. In fact, it succeeds in not only expanding on just about everything that has ever made *Metroid* great while adding a substantial and somehow fitting dose of the kind of visceral, intuitive combat that Team Ninja is famous for. Story-wise, we also get to delve deeper into the history of Samus and even get to hear her speak (a first!) along with a cast of other characters who serve as more than just uninteresting phaser-fodder this time around. While many may be confused or turned off by this seemingly abrupt change of pace, the same people were also worried about the *Metroid Prime* series, which turned out brilliantly. The truth is that the series needed to innovate and evolve, and *Other M* not only delivers an engrossing new gaming experience, it most importantly delivers one worthy of its lineage. *Ryan Rayhill*

## Transformers: War for Cybertron

(Activision; PS3, X360)

Remember that one awesome *Transformers* game a while back? No? That's okay, because neither does anyone else, what with it not existing and all. Most *Transformers* titles up until now have been half-assed attempts to cash in on whatever after-school cartoon or Michael Bay shitstorm that was being perpetrated on our better judgment that year. But the all-new *Transformers: War for Cybertron* aims to erase any memories of past mediocrity with a game that is both a love letter to fans and perhaps one of this year's best action-adventure titles. Taking place before the big guys hit Earth, *War* traces the origins of Optimus Prime's and Megatron's respective rises to power and allows you to take control of numerous favorites, from Autobots Ironhide and Jetfire to Decepticons Starscream and Soundwave, as you battle it out in both single and multiplayer for control of the Transformers' homeworld of Cybertron. *Ryan Rayhill*



## Ableton Partner Instruments

MSRP: \$29-\$79 (each); ableton.com



After several years of holding the format close to its chest, Ableton has opened up the creation of its Live instruments to third-party sound designers for the first time. Released under the banner of Partner Instruments, the series initially brings a total of seven different audio designers to the table, each with its own new range of instruments for Ableton Live. The variety is impressive, ranging from bowed pianos and gamelans to a wide array of drums, guitars, percussion kits, and found-sound libraries, all from the likes of top-notch creators Flatpack, Sonicocture, Puremagnetik, Sample Logic, SonArte, and Toontrack. These make for easy, affordable ways to bring some fresh, fully integrated instruments to your Live library. *Evan Shamoon*



## NEW ON DOMINO

Order online at [www.dominorecordco.us](http://www.dominorecordco.us)



STEVE MASON  
*BOYS OUTSIDE*  
Out June 22. CD/LP/Digi



OWEN PALLETT  
*HEARTLAND*  
Out now. CD/2xLP/Digi



MALACHAI  
*UGLY SIDE OF LOVE*  
Out now. CD/LP/Digi



TO ROCOCO ROT  
*SPECULATION*  
Out June 29. CD/LP/Digi



FOUR TET  
*THERE IS LOVE IN YOU*  
Out now. CD/2xLP/Digi



# THE BOOKS

THE WAY OUT CD / 2xLP



# ELUVIUM

SIMILES CD



# MONO

HOLY GROUND: NYC LIVE CD+DVD / 3xLP+DVD

**Blacklight: Tango Down**  
(Ignition; PS3, X360)



While there is no dearth of first-person military shooters out there, *Blacklight: Tango Down* aims to prove that an explosive, fully realized experience can be delivered without a bloated budget and equally distended price tag. The latest in a tidal wave of downloadable gems, *Blacklight: Tango Down* plops you in the near future as a covert military operative with all manner of gadgets, like a visor that can see through walls, and infinitely customizable weapons, like shotguns with sniper scopes, as you battle your not-so-altruistic counterparts, The Order. With a soundtrack reminiscent of some of Aphex Twin's best, twitchiest work rounding out the "pros" column, *Blacklight* is an affordable, fun alternative to the oft-daunting *Call of Duties* of the world. *Ryan Rayhill*

**Mafia II**  
(2K; PS3, X360)



Harkening back to the heyday of the goodfella, *Mafia II* takes aim at the heart of La Cosa Nostra and delivers a gangster epic head and shoulders above much of what Hollywood has been able to churn out over the last 40 years. As Vito, a down-and-out thug, you and your lifelong pal, Joe, begin a quest to ascend the ranks of organized crime in a tale that sprawls from the post-war 1940s to the baby boom of the 1950s, with everything from the advent of rock 'n' roll to the introduction of Playboy magazine being fully represented in the fictional metropolis of Empire Bay. And yes, any Playboy you come across can be...perused. With a violent, Coppola-worthy story, innovative mission structures, and a sprawling, visually seductive world at your fingertips, it's no wonder that *Mafia II* is a friend of ours. *Ryan Rayhill*

**Dead Rising 2**  
(Capcom; PS3, X360)



A little bit *Running Man* and a lot bit *Dawn of the Dead*, *Dead Rising 2* is set a couple years after the original's zombie apocalypse has taken hold of the country. As former motocross champion Chuck Greene, you are lured to the Vegas-esque Fortune City in hopes of not only striking it rich on the zombie-massacre game show called *Terror is Reality*, but also finding your daughter, who also may be lumbering around this ersatz Sin City as one of the infected. With zombie hordes ranging from the dozens to the thousands on screen at any given time, it's a good thing that just about anything you can find laying around the casinos, restaurants, and shopping centers of the city can be used as a weapon—with varying degrees of effectiveness, of course. Ranging from useless poker chips and erotic massagers strapped to a dirt bike, the amount of items that are both lethal and hilarious are expansive to say the least. Mixing horror, gore, and humor, *Dead Rising 2* is one of the year's must-play games. *Ryan Rayhill*

"I'M LOVING THE GAIA SH-01 SYNTHESIZER! IT BRINGS BACK MEMORIES OF WHEN I BOUGHT MY ORIGINAL VINTAGE SH-101. THE GAIA IS SO COOL AND SO MUCH FUN TO PLAY, AND THE SOUND QUALITY IS WONDERFUL."

Richard Devine  
Sony Creative, Warp Records

GAIA  
SYNTHESIZER SH-01

**ROLAND VP-7 VOCAL PROCESSOR**

MSRP: \$639; ROLAND.COM

A great tool for producers, live performers, or people who just like to eff around with their voice, Roland's VP-7 Vocal Processor stands as one of the most intuitive and multi-faceted vocal-effects pedals currently available. Run a MIDI cable from any of your synths into this box, plug in a microphone, and create any number of vocal harmonies yourself, or use the available voice types Female Choir, Boys Choir, Gregorian Choir, and Jazz Scat to have the box sing for you. The remaining options allow for continual manipulation of the created sounds, and a classic-sounding vocoder thrown into the mix definitely doesn't hurt the VP-7's appeal. *Patric Fallon*



The GAIA SH-01 combines the best of the past with all the flexibility of a modern synth. With its triple-stacked virtual analog synth engine, it's easy to create massive layered sounds. And it's packed with old-school faders, knobs, and buttons, so there's no digging through endless menus—just move the controls and get great sounds NOW!



Experience more of the GAIA at [RolandUS.com/GAIA](http://RolandUS.com/GAIA).

Roland®



GIVE

UP

VIS-ED  
Give Up Art

THE VISUALISTS BEHIND TEMPA AND APPLE PIPS GIVE IT ALL UP.

London-based design house Give Up Art has more than just a clever name behind it. Amongst numerous projects, the husband-wife team of Stuart and Emma Hammersley has also been responsible for the visual identities of dubstep powerhouse Tempa Records, and Appleblim's Apple Pips label.

But it's their collaborative projects that have garnered the pair the most spark, like their joint effort with *XLR8R* photographer Shaun Bloodworth, and Bleep.com, entitled North/South/East/West, in which they created a limited-edition package of photographs and music from the likes of Rustie, HudMo, Falty DL, Mike Slott, FlyLo, Matthew David, and Daedelus. We spoke with GUA's sole designer, Mr. Hammersley, nearly four years after the company formed, about his creative process, why the N/S/E/W project was so gratifying, and which "wedding" tunes he gets down to.

[giveupart.com](http://giveupart.com)



**XLR8R: Where did you grow up?**

Stuart Hammersley: In a village in Essex, about 70 miles from London. I had good times growing up there. After I finished school, I got a place at The London College of Printing to study graphic design, so I moved to London at age 19, and have been here ever since.

**What did you get from your education that wouldn't necessarily translate to job skills?**

Some great friends, mainly. That and how to throw a pretty good party...

**What has been the most gratifying project you've done so far?**

Hard to say, really. I always try to work hard and spend time on projects so that I'm happy with them anyway. But, like lots of designers or artists, I imagine you're probably never entirely happy with older work. For client work, the Benga album and "Night" singles on Tempa is one of them. The photography from

Shaun Bloodworth came out great, and the packaging we came up with looked amazing. Plus, I bumped into Benga just after the finished product had been delivered to Tempa, and he was really, really stoked with how it had turned out. So things like that, when the artist or client is really pleased as well, is hugely gratifying. On a more personal note, the recent North/South/East/West project we worked on with Shaun again, and Bleep.com, was great fun and a lot of hard work to put together. But I'm really happy with how all of it—the photography, the design, and of course the music—came together. And we met some great and inspiring people along the way.

**Do you find yourself coming back to certain themes throughout your work? If so, do you choose to embrace it or fight it?**

Yes, sometimes the same things crop up, and it can be interesting to try and refine and improve upon past efforts. But equally, I like to try and

move things on, or in different directions, and collaborating with other people is one of the best ways to do this... and being open to others' ideas can help you take things in a different direction that I maybe wouldn't go on myself.

**One thing I admire about your work is that it is seemingly guided by classic international typographic principles, and at the same time looks futuristic and fresh. Is your subtlety a reaction to the past decade of mega-graphic overload?**

I don't think it's been a hugely conscious decision. I was, and still am, a great admirer of that early-'90s Designer's Republic work—that was the epitome of mega-graphic overload. The thing is they did it so well, and so many other people didn't. But I really just personally like the clear, simple, and bold approaches—and believe in the power of clear and direct graphic communication... but not so severe that it becomes cold and uninteresting I hope. I also



Opposite: Packaging for the Rinse mix series

Above: The N/S/E/W project for Warp and Bleep.com



Above left:  
LP sleeve for Roska's  
*Roska*



Above right:  
sleeve for Benga & Coki's  
*Night EP*

Opposite left:  
LP sleeve for Skream's  
*Outside the Box*

Opposite right:  
12" sleeve for Beezy

Opposite bottom:  
12" packaging for  
*Headhunter*



just happen to really love flat, graphic colors and well-designed typography.

**What are some sources you draw from creatively, that might not directly correlate with graphic design?**

Many of the usual things, like films, music, art. I also have two young sons, who are always drawing and making comics and stuff like that. And it's always great for me to see their take on things... their sometimes odd ways of looking at things.

**What do you do when you are faced with a creative block?**

I've learnt to just leave what I'm stuck on, and do something else. Ideally, I'll go away and do something completely unrelated to it, and come back to it with fresh eyes. And usually what's wrong with something will become apparent.

**Have you had a mentor figure in your career who has influenced your work, work ethic, or process?**

Not directly, no. Certain colleagues or collaborators I've worked with in the past have been inspiring. And I always have the desire to

keep improving both Give Up Art and myself. But mainly I'd say Emma, my wife and partner in GUA, has always been really supportive and honest in her opinions when it's needed. And she's a really good motivator and inspiration in getting things done.

**What typeface would you like to never see used again?**

Well you could so easily start with about 5,000 crappily digitized, awful comedy fonts out there. But a proper typeface—well, despite it being designed by the great Otl Aicher—I'd have to say Rotis.

**What's your process like? What's the first thing you usually do?**

First thing, always, is to sit and think for a while, with a sketchbook. I'm not amazing at drawing, so it's mainly just rough scribbles and written notes about print details, shoot ideas, font, etc. Then maybe I'll turn to books or the web for a bit of reference or research. Once a design is underway, I tend to work up ideas quickly, save a file, then re-work that version slightly. So I can end up with between 10 and 20 versions of one thing. Then I stop and review

them again, and hopefully come to a decision, then work on refining that into something to show the client.

**What do you find to be the biggest obstacle when designing type?**

The letter S.

**At which point did you feel people started to 'get' what you were doing?**

I've never really thought about that to be honest. I suppose it might have been when our work for Tempa was starting to get a bit better known. There was a clear aesthetic to the label that people seemed to respond to and generally like, and I started to hear that from a few different people. So maybe then?

**How did you start collaborating with photographer Shaun Bloodworth?**

I used to art-direct a magazine about restaurants, chefs, and food, and Shaun came in to show his portfolio one day. I started to commission him on travel features and portraits. Not only were the pictures great, but Shaun's very easy to work with and cooperative. And enthusiastic. Plus, I think we

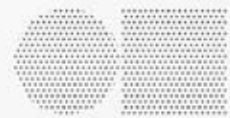




# DJ Zinc & Ms. Dynamite

/ Wile Out

/ Out Now:  
Vinyl!  
/ Digital



Opposite:  
street posters for DJ Zinc's  
"Wile Out" single

bonded over a shared love of barbecued meat products.

**What's your work space like? Are there some things you just cannot work without?**

I share a studio with some friends who have another design studio called Picture. So there's about 12 desks, open plan... with a table-tennis table for a bit of exercise. And as long as I have a desk, a shelf of some good books, and I'm able to listen to music when I'm working, then I'm usually pretty okay. I don't like working in silence.

**Who is one artist, living or dead, with whom you would really like to collaborate?**

Sol Lewitt. Or Keith Haring or William Eggleston.

**What do you listen to while you work?**

All sorts of music, from fresh new tunes from our various music clients. Rinse. fm, lots of odd, old disco and DJ mixes. A fair bit of '70s German Krautrock stuff, if I can get away with it. Quite a few podcasts, *XLR8R* in there of course! I also have a pretty killer "wedding" playlist that's always a winner, if you like a bit of Carly Simon, Olivia Newton John, and ELO.

**When you're designing an album cover, how much of it depends on what the music sounds like vs. what the artist wants to see?**

I must say I've been really fortunate in that nearly always there's been at least one idea that we've come up with that the artist or label likes, rather than an artist coming with very firm fixed ideas.

**Which designers in the past seem to have had the biggest influence on your work, and why?**

In my early days at college it would have been David Carson's work for *Ray Gun*, the Designer's Republic, and Peter Saville's work for Factory Records. After college, I discovered a lot of Dutch designers like Ben Bos, Wim Crowell, and so on. They seemed to take the best bits of the International style of Swiss modernism and marry it with great colors and a bit more of a sense of fun.

**What are your five favorite album covers of all time. Why?**

Wow, tough question. I love so much cover design, and different things for different reasons. If you ask me tomorrow these may change, but right now I'd say: Kraftwerk *Autobahn* (Kling Klang). Super graphic. Blue motorway road sign, and some nice type as well. In fact, virtually any Kraftwerk album cover. *Kraftwerk 1*, *Computer World*, *Trans Europe Express*...

**New Order *Movement*** (Factory). Simple, minimal, and lovely Saville design. The uncoated blue stock it's made from really makes it. One of the reasons why a physical object for music is so appealing and important to me.

**Yes Yes** (Atlantic). Fletcher, Forbes, and Gill. Simple black cover, with a graphic, hand-drawn speech bubble in lovely clashing colors.

**Just Ice *Back To The Old School*** (Sleeping Bag). Hand-drawn illustrated cover by New

York graf artists Gnome and Gemini. Mid-'80s classic graffiti drawing of Just Ice and Mantronix with a TR-909 under his arm. A sleeve I tried to copy as a teenager. And I'd say this sleeve is probably responsible, along with Keith Haring's art, for getting me interested in graphic design in the first place.

**Miles Davis *Tutu*** (Columbia). Phenomenal, stark black-and-white portrait from Irving Penn. Front, back covers, and inners—all great.

**Do you have a philosophy when it comes to design?**

I read a great interview with Paul Rand a while back. I think he quotes Mies van der Rohe as saying that being good is more important than being original. Originality is a product, not an intention. I think that's a pretty good idea to stick to for GUA: really well-crafted, good work.

**What's the best advice you've ever received? And the worst?**

Best advice: Probably from Emma again, to just get on with things and do it, and try something. Better to try and fail, than never actually do it in the first place. Worst advice: My friend Joe telling me to try the chicken feet in a dim sum restaurant.

Win a copy of *North/South/East/West*, courtesy of Bleep.com, in this month's contest on page 10.

## OUTBOX: SOLVENT

Zimbabwe-born Canadian Jason Amm has long been at the forefront of contemporary synth-pop. With his arsenal of vintage analog gear and drum machines, Amm has crafted four full-length albums under the name Solvent, which have continually explored new realms of electronic pop music over the course of 12 years. After releasing his latest for Ghostly International, *Subject to Shift*, Amm tells us about his unexpected birthplace, what appendage he'd sacrifice for his music gear, and how he hasn't a clue as to what—gasp!—the *Twilight* series is...  
*Patric Fallon*

**What were you up to during the six years between *Apples & Synthesizers* and *Subject to Shift*?**

Well, I did actually release a fair amount of new music during that time, just not a Solvent album. That's not to deny that there's a big unproductive gap there! Mainly, I was busy being the stay-at-home parent to my five-year-old daughter, Iris. And add to that a couple of musical identity crises.

**So... Canadian, but born in Zimbabwe, eh?**

That's where my father was from. He met my mom in Canada and they moved back for a while and had me. It was called Rhodesia then. They left during the war that lead to the country becoming Zimbabwe. I've been in Canada since I was two or so.

**If you were commissioned to score the new *Twilight* movie, which artist (dead or alive) would you like to collaborate with?**

I haven't the faintest idea what *Twilight* is, except that it's maybe some sort of teen vampire thing? So am I supposed to go for some kind of goth theme then? Well, I'd love to collaborate with Siouxsie Sioux under any circumstances, so let's go with that.

**Would you rather have all of your music gear destroyed or have two fingers surgically removed?**

Assuming you mean no insurance on the gear, definitely, I'd chose to have the fingers off.

**Who is speaking on the phone recordings in "Unknown Caller," from *Subject to Shift*?**

In the intro ("Hello?") it's me, while the stuff in the background is not a phone conversation



at all, it's an interview with Siouxsie and Budgie that I processed to sound like a phone recording. Weird that Siouxsie has come up twice in this interview! Maybe I had subliminally looked ahead and that made me think of her.

**What's the worst thing you've heard your music called?**

"For all his major-key optimism, Solvent's is an outlook with only a disheartening modicum of stability: a homogeneity that, quite simply, gets by." [Ed's note: From a 2008 Pitchfork review.] That, and Italo Disco—which is not bad music, it's just that it comes up pretty often, and I don't get the connection at all.

**If you were actually a solvent, which would you be?**

To answer this I'd actually have to know something about solvents, and I don't. I just named myself after the Skinny Puppy song.

**What's the lamest thing about being a musician in Canada?**

It's just a small market with very few cities to

support a healthy music scene. I've only played seven cities in the whole country. If I could play shows in the US without having to go through the long, tedious, and expensive process of getting a work visa, I would have a lot less to complain about.

**What's the best?**

I'm an artist, and I have health insurance.

**Name one man and one woman you wish you could sing like.**

Man: Gary Numan. Woman: Alison Moyet.

**If you could have one of your songs live on as your legacy, which would it be?**

Well, "My Radio" is surely the best song I have written, and probably the best I ever will write. But for some sort of insight into me, something more personal, I'd choose "Duckie."

*Subject to Shift* is out now on Ghostly International. [myspace.com/solventcltv](http://myspace.com/solventcltv)

XLR8R (ISSN 1526-4246) is published bi-monthly with issues in Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/June, Jul/Aug, Sep/Oct, and Nov/Dec for \$20 a year by Amalgam Media, Inc., 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to XLR8R, 3180 18th St. #207, San Francisco, CA 94110.

AUSTIN • BOSTON • CHICAGO • DENVER • LOS ANGELES  
MINNEAPOLIS • PHILADELPHIA • PORTLAND • NEW YORK  
SAN FRANCISCO • SEATTLE + MORE TO COME



INTRODUCING THE XLR8R + SCION CITY GUIDE APPLICATION  
FOR THE GOOGLE NEXUS ONE AND MOTOROLA DROID

XLR8R and Scion present the best in music, food, shops, galleries and more, now for Android.

Log on to [xlr8r.com/cityguide](http://xlr8r.com/cityguide) or download for free from the Android Market.

Also available for iPhone from the iTunes store.



Scan with the Android Barcode Scanner to download directly from this ad.



Bombay Sapphire. Explore Responsibly.

One&Only Palmilla, Mexico



BOMBAY SAPPHIRE IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK. ©2010 IMPORTED BY THE BOMBAY SPIRITS COMPANY U.S.A., CORAL GABLES, FL. GIN - 47% ALC. BY VOL.

Ten journeys contained in a single drop.



10 EXOTIC BOTANICALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GIVE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE A REFINED, BALANCED TASTE.

[bombaysapphire.com](http://bombaysapphire.com)

**BOMBAY**  **SAPPHIRE**  
*Distilled*  
 LONDON  
 DRY GIN  
*Distilled from 100%  
 European Neutral Spirit  
 since 1840*  
 PRODUCT OF ENGLAND  
 IMPORTED

THE SPIRIT OF EXPLORATION